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SHADOWMAN #13X
BAGGED WITH THIS ISSUE!

BCM #7 Introduction by Rich Johnston

So, we all made it out of Villain's Month alive. Some of the DC 3D lenticular covers you can now pick up for cover price or less (*First Born*, I'm looking at you). There were only a few casualties along the way. I put my copy of *Joker's Daughter* in the oven. We can all take a breather.

Except now Bleeding Cool website readers know that next year, DC Comics will take September out to put all their books five years in the future, to create a new timeline for every book that they will either aim towards... or never reach. With, you know, consequences! And a new weekly comic, probably also called *Five Years Later* by Jeff Lemire, Dan Jurgens, and Keith Giffen to explore this future unreachable world where Superman and Batman are in their thirties. Where Batwoman still isn't married. Where Mark Waid still hasn't gotten to write the *Superman* monthly comic. And where DC Comics is in California.

Five Years Later. It begins now. Start watching for hints in the regular DC comics and let us know what you discover.

And the September after that? I have no idea, seriously, what do you want from me, blood?

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See Inside Back Cover for Details!

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LIFE IN THE GUTTERS
By Rich Johnston

London In Comics

I live in London, England and I like it. People are less likely to carry guns here, indeed to be less aggressive all round. As a writer who has managed to upset a number of people, I've been rather grateful for that fact. The worst I ever got in the UK was being manhandled out of a *2000AD* pub party by Garth Ennis, convinced I was trying to get stories out of the inebriated Glenn Fabry (we were actually discussing the intricacies of Spanish church architecture). When in the USA, I've been beaten up by an aggrieved comic book creator after I used a number of his tweets in an article, and have been threatened with a pool cue by someone who thought I was having a go at another creator's parents (I'd actually talked about their horrendous use of parentheses).

There's also lots of comics stuff about. If ever you visit London, here's a brief guide to the best.

There are three major comic stores in the West End of London. Forbidden Planet on Shaftesbury Avenue: a superstore of comics and related stuff like toys, statues, merchandise and an amazing trove of sci-fi and fantasy novels. They stock a lot and stock it in depth – and a previous location appeared in the Alan Moore/Alan Davis Captain Britain comics in the middle of a superhero fight. No wonder they had to move.

There's Gosh Comics on Berwick Street: the same street as the famous London comic shop of the early seventies, Dark They Were And Golden Eyed. An arts comic shop, they are probably the coolest store and the place no hipster can be seen not popping into. And it makes an appearance in *League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Century*, too.

And there's Orbital Comics: which has used its photographic studio home, to great use as a gallery, for exhibitions, parties, and happenings. And you know what? It's my favourite. I don't think it's turned up in a comic yet, but it's only a matter of time.

Venturing further afield may take you to the Silver Age specialists, 30th Century Comics in Putney. Or the cheery coffee-and-cake-and-comics store that is Eggs Milk Butter in Hoxteth. The small but cheery Ace Comics in the far west of Richmond and Krypton Komics in the far east of Walthamstow. Or the even-cooler-than-Gosh, Mega City Comics, purely by way of it being in Camden.

But more than that, Paul Gravett runs the Comica events with arty comics goings on and the annual Comiket fair of small press titles, in fact there are comics fairs in London on throughout the year.

You can be guaranteed several galleries and museums will run comics related events, with upcoming exhibitions at Tate Modern and the British Museum, guaranteed to get national coverage. And there are always kids' events, such as the recent Beanotown at London's Southbank, which turned the legendary British kids comic into a free event all summer long.

There's the outstanding Cartoon Museum near the British Museum which runs amazing exhibitions through the year. Foyles Bookstore on Charing Cross Road is so addicted to running graphic novel events, that they have erected boards outside the shop because of architectural renovations, but covered them with a cartoon history of the shop, told by a variety of local comic book artists. Even the Japanese Embassy in London throws regular manga and anime parties.

There are even a few publishers, home to Titan Comics, Nobrow (who have now opened their own shop here), Selfmadehero, and Blank Slate calling this town home. Two minutes from my front door, is the small operation known as Soaring Penguin Press, which is rather handy, especially when it comes to obtaining review samples.

There's a monthly drinking session for comic folk, attended by the likes of Kieron Gillen, Paul Cornell, David Hine, Simon Furman, Si Spurrier, Emma Viacelli, Rian Hughes, Tony Lee, and the Titan boys and girls, somewhere around Soho. There's a similar session with the Comica folks. And occasionally they intermingle.

There are the conventions, the MCM London Comic Con twice a year, the biggest of its kind here, the London Super Comic Con with its all-star (read, American) guests, and they must bring back Mark Millar's Kapow! Sometime surely? They said they were only resting after all.

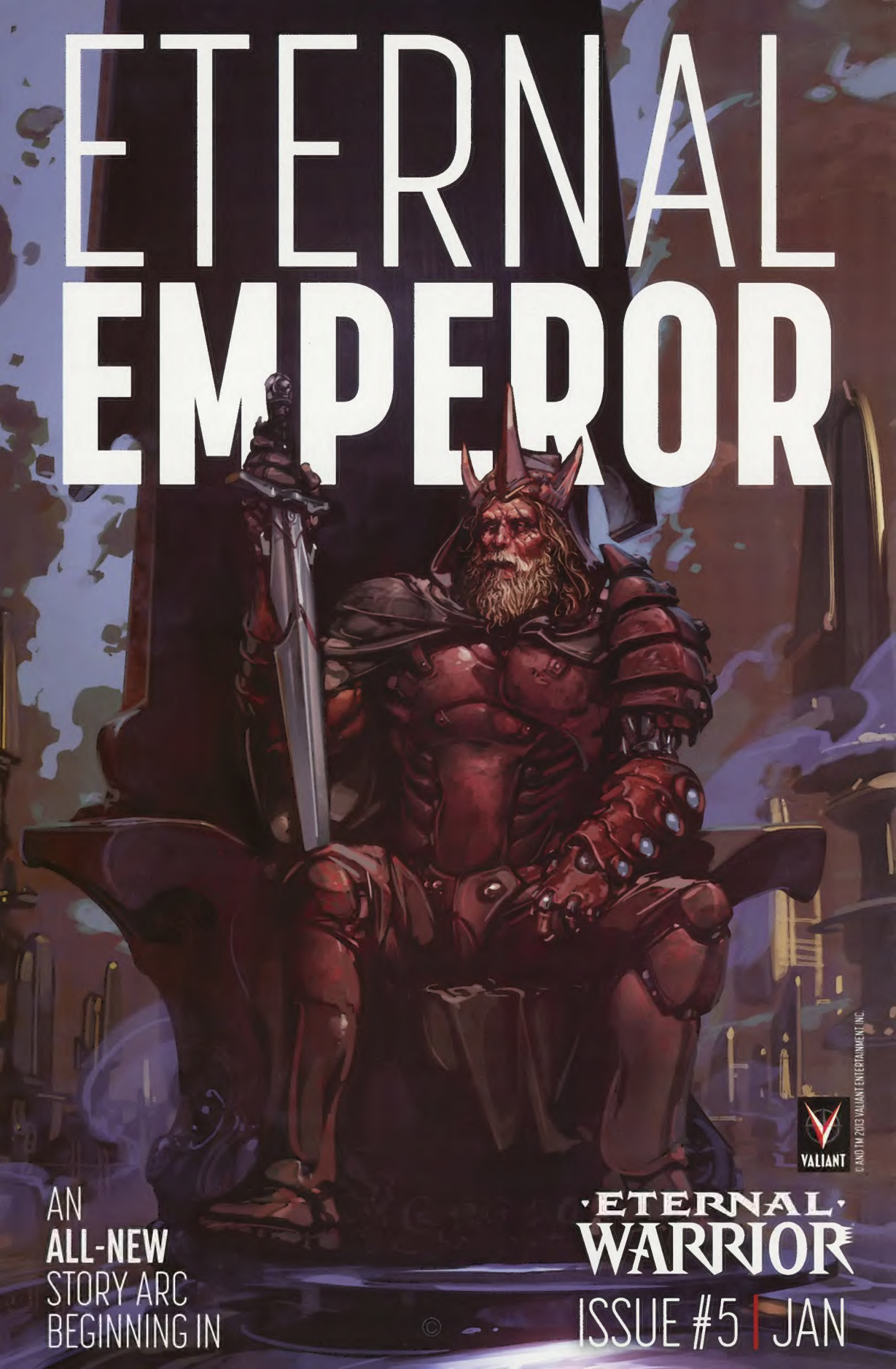
And, I suppose, there's me. Writing the industry's leading comics magazine and the most influential comic blog (according to those nice people at Technorati), all while doing it all from London.

There was a time when I could have made the move, I was offered a comics job in New York, and I could have up sticks and done the big jump across. And after all, it is the home of American comics. But London is similar to New York in so many ways. There's the internet. And, you know, there's guns and things.

What can I say? I'm very glad that Americans have the right to bear arms. And that they keep them over there...

Got a tip for Rich? You can contact him, or any Bleeding Cool contributor, with story tips, comments, questions, or to ask about advertising at: ***BleedingCool.com/contact***

You can join in the conversation at the Bleeding Cool online discussion forum: ***BleedingCool.com/forums***


ETERNAL
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AN
ALL-NEW
STORY ARC
BEGINNING IN
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WELCOME TO CHRISTMASLAND:
JOE HILL'S WRAITH COMES TO COMICS

A conversation with Charles P. Wilson III

By James Kuhoric

WELCOME TO CHRISTMASLAND:
JOE HILL'S WRAITH COMES TO COMICS

A conversation with Charles P. Wilson III

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There are a few names in horror that evoke an immediate response when you pick up one of their books. Joe Hill is one of novelists whose work catches you by the spine and wrings your vertebrae like a dirty washcloth until you are mentally and physically exhausted. That's a compliment, really. The first time I was introduced to his work was in reading *Heart Shaped Box*. I didn't know who he was, just that it was being recommended as the "best ghost story ever" by several reviewers I trusted. And just a few pages into the novel, I was hooked with the characters, the creeping horror, and palpable dread. They were right, it was one of the best ghost stories I'd ever read. That cemented me as a fan and sent me in search of everything he has written since.

For the past five years, Joe's *Locke & Key* series at IDW has done the same. It threw that nondescript barbed hook out there and reeled in a host of horror fans who would follow the ins and outs of the series to its inevitable and stunning end. Obviously expectations for his next comics work were high. After all, how do you top *Locke & Key*? Some said you couldn't. But Joe did. Building off his new novel *NOS4A2*, he welcomed readers to the horrors of Christmasland and a vile spirit that feeds off the life force of lost children in *The Wraith*. As a parent, there is a deeper connection to stories that involve kids and a more guttural reaction to their distress that is instilled in you. *NOS4A2* is a creepy story in itself, but with the added elements of this fiend's favored prey comes a level of fear that is reserved for those with pint-sized prodigy.

The Wraith is a prequel to *NOS4A2* and introduces Charles Talent Manx, a fiend that keeps himself alive by sucking the life

MHM? WHAT? OH! OH, MY GOODNESS! OF COURSE I WILL LET YOU GO! I AM NOT THE SORT OF FIEND WHO WOULD HOLD A CHILD AGAINST HER WILL... ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY.
WHEN WE GET WHERE WE ARE GOING, YOU WILL FLY FROM THIS CAR, MORE FREE THAN YOU HAVE EVER BEEN BEFORE. THAT IS THE CHARLIE MANX GUARANTEE!
I WISH
I WILL TELL YOU ANOTHER THING! IF THERE IS NOT A SMILE ON YOUR FACE WHEN WE ARRIVE AT OUR DESTINATION— IF YOU ARE NOT AS HAPPY AS YOU HAVE EVER BEEN—WHY, I WILL TURN THIS CAR AROUND AND DRIVE YOU STRAIGHT BACK HOME!
BUT I BET YOU WILL BE GRINNING SO BIG BY THEN, I WILL BE ABLE TO COUNT EVERY TOOTH IN YOUR HEAD!

WELL, LOOK AT THAT! I SEE YOU MOVING AROUND BACK THERE!
YOU ARE UP PAST YOUR BEDTIME, LITTLE ONE! MIDNIGHT CAME LONG AGO... AND WENT AWAY YAWNING!
I HAVE NEVER HURT THEM... AND I WILL NEVER HURT YOU, EITHER. THAT IS ANOTHER CHARLIE MANX PROMISE!

force out of kids and warping them into nasty monsters in their own right. That's vile enough, right? But Manx doesn't just harvest souls, he actually takes them to an in-between place called "Christmasland" where they linger in a faux state of eternal Christmas Day. Hill himself said of his decision to tell the story of *The Wraith* in comics that, "The world of *NOS4A2* is very, very big, and I only had a chance to explore a part of it in the course of the novel. I told the story I wanted to tell, but I also feel there's a lot more to discover." Hill's intention is to serve two purposes with the new series, to both entertain fans of *NOS4A2* with an original prequel tale and to give horror comic fans that haven't read the novel something equally frightening to enjoy. *The Wraith* is a self-contained story that can be enjoyed with or without having experienced the nightmare visions of *NOS4A2* beforehand.

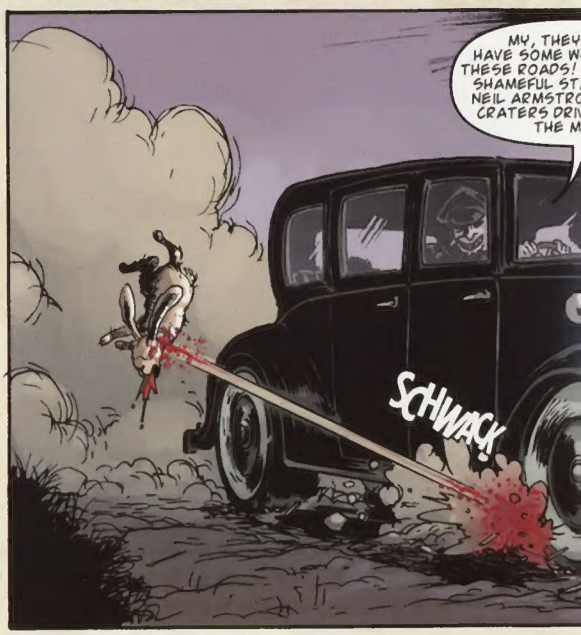
But how do you capture the vivid images from Hill's fevered brain as a comic book? You need an illustrator who has both conquered the vast expressive range of children and of horror to translate the strange intricacies of Christmasland. In a brilliant choice, IDW selected Charles P. Wilson III, best known for his stunning work on The Stuff of Legend. In its own way, Stuff explores similar nightmare scenarios and the illustrations that brought the toy characters to life are the perfect complement to Hill's frightening landscape in *NOS4A2*. We asked Charles P. Wilson III about working on *The Wraith*, his inspiration, and what is like to get the opportunity of a lifetime working with a master like Hill.

JK Your work on *The Stuff of Legend* has been some of the best all ages work laced with horror in comics. Was that underlying horror a part of your preferences as a creator or was it developed by the needs of the unique story you were telling?

CPW Thanks so much! The horror "stuff" in *The Stuff of Legend*'s story comes in part from my interests as an illustrator and from one of my collaborators, Mike Raicht, co-writer of the book alongside Brian Smith. Mike brings mood and horror (scary drama) to the book and Brian contributes life and humor (uplifting comedy!). Or I like to think of it that way. Early on it was shaping into a much gorier book, but we reigned that in as best we could to be as accommodating as possible for younger readers. The story does call for the illustration to get pretty dark though, unless I couldn't imagine it as anything else.

JK What is it like to work with Joe Hill in bringing something as uniquely terrifying as the Wraith to life in comics? Did you spend a lot of time working out ideas and scenes before going to the illustration stage?

CPW It's been very exciting to draw stuff straight out of *NOS4A2*. Seeing an illustration of Charlie Manx and the Wraith by Gabriel Rodriguez online about a year ago I was curious about what he and Joe were up to outside of their book *Locke & Key*. I enjoyed *Locke & Key* a great deal and devoured other books they had worked on individually, including Joe's novels and short stories, and found myself becoming a fan. So it was a pleasant surprise to be asked to draw a book I was already curious about and, after reading *NOS4A2*, I wanted to get as many of the descriptive details from Joe's book right in *Wraith*. When I set to drawing Christmasland I found myself checking everything I drew against the descriptions in the novel - what was shown in shop windows, what the buildings were made of, the kids' decorations on the tree and The Sleigh Coaster. And the car! A lot of my favorite parts in the novel involved the car whether its driver was in it or not, and it's hard not



IF YOU PROMISE TO STOP CRYING, I WILL TRY TO EXPLAIN... ALL OF IT. ABOUT THIS CAR AND YOUR DREAMS AND CHRISTMASLAND AND WHO I AM. BUT YOU HAVE TO PROMISE NOT TO CRY! DO WE HAVE A DEAL?
GOOD GIRL.

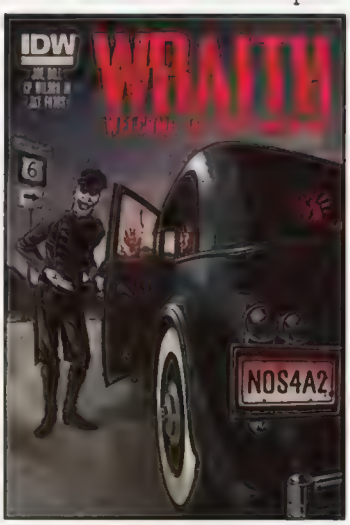
"OH, CHILD! WHAT A SILLY QUESTION!
"YOU ALREADY KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING. YOU HAVE SPENT THE LAST TEN HOURS DREAMING ABOUT IT!
"WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO CHRISTMASLAND! IT IS A REAL PLACE, YOU KNOW. THE ARCTIC EYE... THE ICE MAZE... THE GREAT SLEIGHCOASTER... YOU'LL SEE THEM ALL COME SUN-UP!
"DO NOT LOOK SO SURPRISED. I WAS DREAMING YOUR DREAM WITH YOU! AND WHAT A DREAM IT WAS! I DO NOT REMEMBER ANY TEARS ON YOUR FACE THEN!
"I KNOW IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE BUT..."
SHOULD ORK DONE ON THEY ARE IN A ATE! MISTER NG HIT LESS ING AROUND OON!
NOS4A2

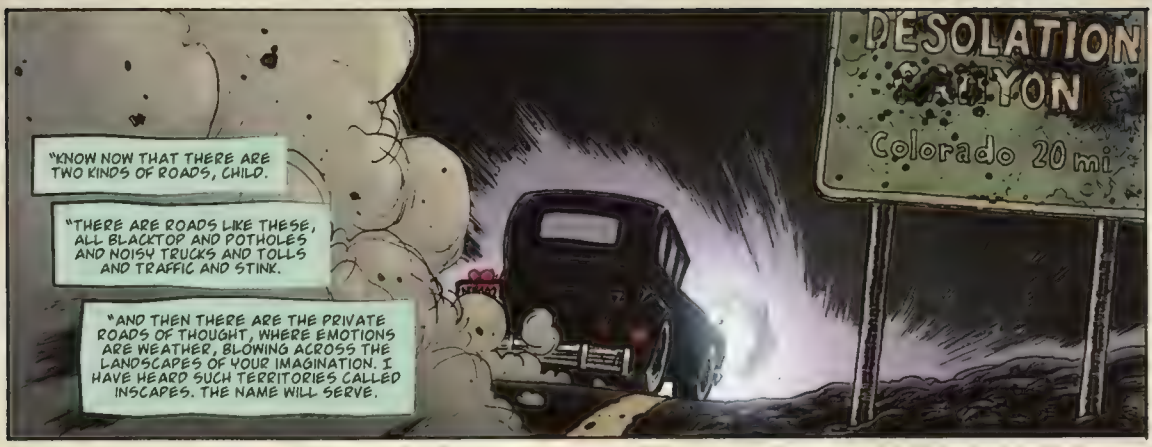
to see the car as a character when I draw it in *Wraith*. There's a panel in the comic where the Wraith, *NOS4A2*, sits next to another car and I remember I got a real sense of the distinction between the two cars.

JK Are there points in the illustration process for *The Wraith* where you simultaneously can't believe you are working on a project with Joe and when you are utterly terrified by the same circumstance? It must be very daunting to be the man to bring these unique nightmares to life in comics.

CPW I think it's very, very cool I get to work on a comic with Joe. I love reading *Locke & Key* and I love cracking his other books open every now and then after I've already read them, even if only to jump to my favorite parts. He, Chris Ryall, and Jay Fotos have made drawing this book too fun and too cool to be terrified of any aspect of it.

It is clear from our conversation with Wilson that the horrors he illustrates come from a fond place in his enjoyment of Hill's work. For any fan of horror that visits the disturbing stories of *The Wraith*, a frightening opportunity to ride alongside Manx in the Wraith awaits. And a trip to Christmasland may be just what you need to experience the true horrors of *NOS4A2* on the comics page. But remember that this classic car doesn't use gasoline for fuel. It consumes your soul...




"KNOW NOW THAT THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF ROADS, CHILD.
"THERE ARE ROADS LIKE THESE, ALL BLACKTOP AND POTHOLES AND NOISY TRUCKS AND TOLLS AND TRAFFIC AND STINK.
"AND THEN THERE ARE THE PRIVATE ROADS OF THOUGHT, WHERE EMOTIONS ARE WEATHER, BLOWING ACROSS THE LANDSCAPES OF YOUR IMAGINATION. I HAVE HEARD SUCH TERRITORIES CALLED INSCAPES. THE NAME WILL SERVE.
DESOLATION CANYON
Colorado 20 mi

"WITH THE RIGHT KIND OF RIDE AND THE RIGHT KIND OF DRIVER, YOU CAN START OUT ON THE FIRST SORT OF ROAD, AND WIND UP... EVENTUALLY... ON THE OTHER SORT.
"WELL, LET ME TELL YOU, THIS 1938 ROLLS-ROYCE WRAITH IS THE RIGHT KIND OF RIDE! AND I AM THE RIGHT KIND OF DRIVER! CHARLES TALENT MANX THE THIRD, BORN IN CRIPPLE CREEK, COLORADO! YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE HOW LONG AGO, EITHER!

"HA, HA! YOU JUST TRY AND GUESS HOW OLD, LITTLE ONE! I WILL GIVE YOU A HINT: I AM AS OLD AS MY NOSE AND EVEN OLDER THAN MY TEETH!
"IN THE DAYS WHEN I WAS A BOY, IF YOU WANTED TO GO SOMEWHERE, YOU DIDN'T PUT YOUR HANDS ON A STEERING WHEEL. YOU GRABBED AHOLD OF THE REINS AND SAID GIDDYAP!
"I WAS VERY LITTLE THE FIRST TIME I EVER TOOK A RIDE ONTO THE OTHER ROADS OF THOUGHT. THIS WAS BEFORE THE WRAITH, WHEN I WAS NO OLDER THAN YOU ARE NOW.

"I HAD A DIFFERENT RIDE THEN. I SMILE TO THINK OF IT.
"IT WAS MY CHRISTMAS PRESENT. IT WAS MY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT.
"IT WAS MY FANTOM."

WORKING IN THE SHADOWS

by Dan Wickline

WORKING IN THE SHADOWS

by Dan Wickline

In 2012, Valiant Entertainment returned to the comic shelves with new series featuring the Valiant characters. The fifth title released was *Shadowman* by the creative team of Justin Jordan and Patrick Zircher. Issue one debuted November 7, 2012.

In the year that followed we learned a lot about Jack Boniface, the current recipient of the Shadowman loa. His father, Josiah, stood against Master Darque as he led the forces of evil that invaded New Orleans. Josiah as Shadowman was able to banish Darque, but was pulled into the portal as well, vanishing from the Earth. Jack, protected by an amulet that hides his power, is taken by his mother Helena LeBreton as she fled the city. Once she finds Jack a safe place and knowing he is protected, she disappears, leaving her son to foster care.

As he gets older, Jack is of course curious about his parents. But when he discovers they were criminals on the run, he is furious and throws his amulet into the river. Without it, Jack is now detectable by both his enemies and the Abettors, the group that assisted his father and the Shadowmen through history. He meets Dox, an old friend of Josiah's and Alyssa, Dox's protégé in the Abettors. He also comes across a creature named Twisted who has been sent by Master Darque to open a portal so the evil sorcerer can return to Earth.

A confrontation with Twisted's servants, the Brethren, causes the loa to take over Jack and bring the new Shadowman to life. This all leads to a showdown between Jack and Master Darque in the Deadside and costs the life of Dox. Jordan's run on the series included an origin story for Shadowman that loa was the offspring of Marius Boniface and Sandria Darque that would not survive had its mother not cast a spell creating the loa.

As the series moves into its second year starting with the special *Bleeding Cool Magazine #13X* issue, the creative team changes to Peter Milligan and Roberto De La Torre. Milligan has worked for Marvel, DC, 2000AD, and Vertigo in the past on such titles as *X-Men, Elektra, Red Lanterns, Shade – The Changing Man,* and *The Human Target.* De La Torre has done the art on *Ms. Marvel, Thunderbolts,* and *The Invincible Iron Man.*

I sat down with Peter Milligan to talk about Shadowman and where the second year might take us.

THIS IS YOUR FIRST WORK FOR VALIANT, HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THIS PROJECT?

Obliquely, you could say. I've known the editor - Warren Simons - for some time and we've wanted to work together again on the right project. We had been discussing something else - which may or may not happen - and then he asked me to write an

8-page *Shadowman* story. This meant I had to read all of the first year, and also to give my thoughts on what I felt I'd do with it, the kind of direction I'd be interested in taking it in. This really connected with Warren and he asked if I'd be interested in writing the monthly title. By now I was intrigued with Shadowman and what I thought I wanted to do with it so jumped at the chance.

The first year of the series went to establish the new Shadowman. What do you see as the main focus of the second year?

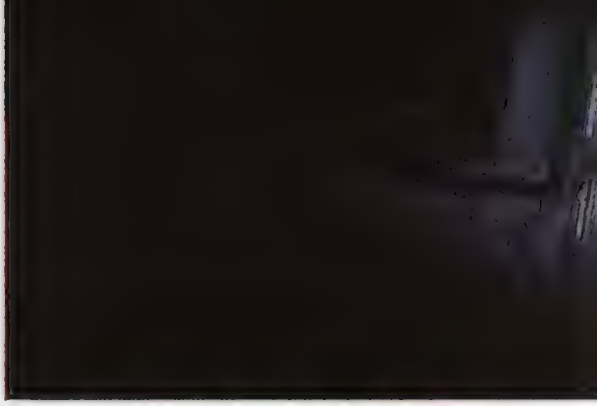
The main focus is Jack. Jack's life, his relationship with Alyssa and the Abettors, his demons, and what his role as Shadowman is.

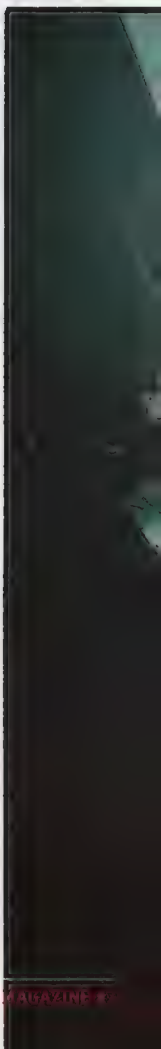
Who is Jack Boniface to you? When we meet him he has a job that he earned through hard work, a woman that liked him, and a mysterious past. Now he has a better idea of where he came from... but caused the woman to die and I'm not sure what his employment status is?

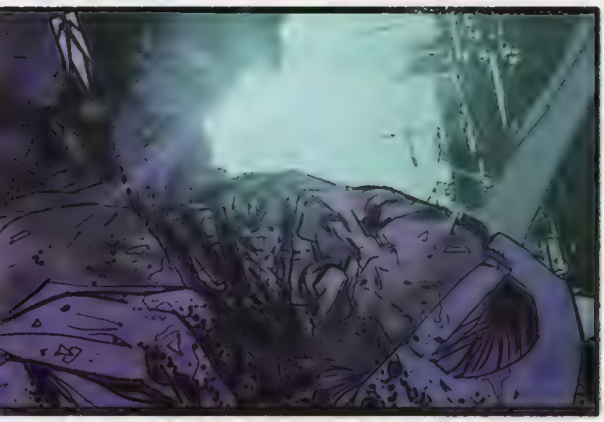
Jack has a nice face and a charming manner. But I don't believe he's that straightforward. I don't believe that anyone could be that straightforward after going through all that Jack Boniface has gone through. So, I thought, let's pull back that pretty mask. Let's see what face Jack Boniface's face is like beneath it. But let's try to do this without driving Jack insane or killing him. It's probably going to be a close run thing.

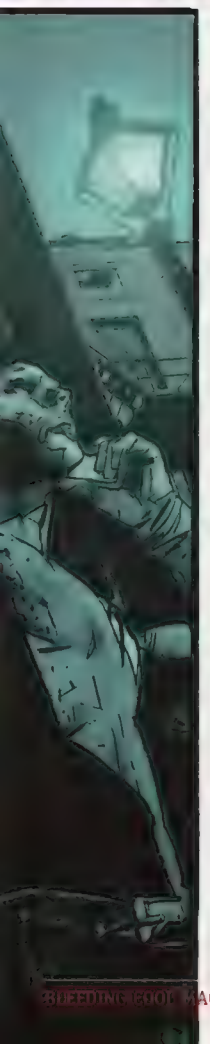
With Dox dead, you have an untrained Shadowman and an inexperienced Abettor in Alyssa. How do you see this dynamic moving forward? Will it stay the two of them or will his cast expand?

First off, I like that both Jack and Alyssa are a little out of their depth. This throws them together, and I want to build on their relationship. I like seeing them









together. They somehow work as a couple, the way some people do. Though, of course, the death of Dox - and other things - will cast a shadow over them. The cast will expand. In fact, there'll be some pretty crazy characters showing up. We'll also get to know some more of the Abettors, who have a shock in store for Jack and Alyssa.

We learned the true origin of the Shadowman loa and how it ties to Master Darque's sister Sandria and Marius Boniface. Now the readers know the truth, but does Jack?

Not yet. Alyssa does, or she will, but they have more pressing things to discuss.

The city of New Orleans is often portrayed as much more alive than other cities, sometimes written like a character unto itself. How much will the fact that the stories take place in New Orleans play into the next year?

I think New Orleans is an incredible place. I've been there a few times and was blown away. I loved the fading architecture, the cemeteries, the sense of the living and the dead being side by side. We won't be restricted to the city - I really like it out in the swamps, those backwoods places too - but New Orleans IS like a character in the book.

What do you see as Shadowman's overall role in the Valiant Universe? What place does he take in comparison to the others here?

To me he is the most interesting character in the Valiant Universe. Because he doesn't give all his secrets up easily. I feel there's so much more we can learn about him. His relationship with the loa that's bonded to him has hardly been explored, and I intend to do some serious exploring in my run.

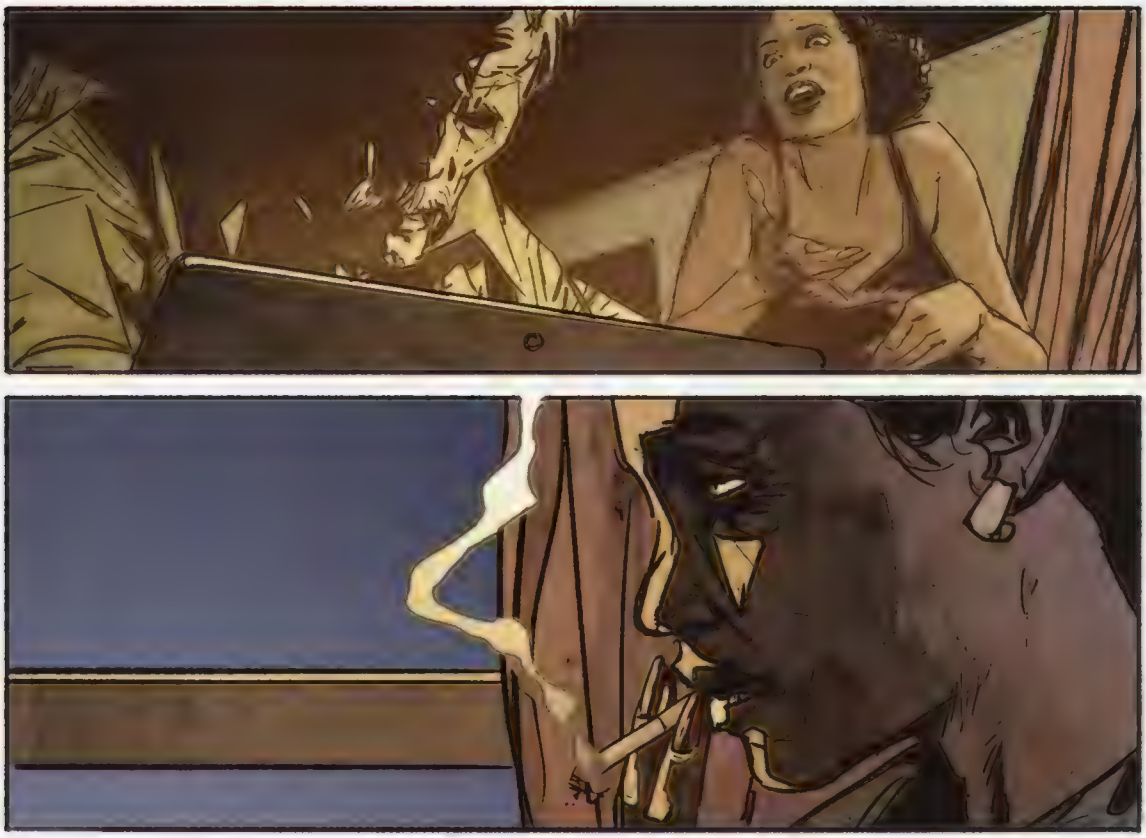
How does your approach to this character in this series differ from other stories and projects you have taken on in the past?

I'm not setting out to approach it differently. I have the green light - I think! - to take this character and book to some pretty disturbing places and so I'm just concentrating on the character and his condition and in what fiendish ways I can mess with the poor guy's head.

Do you write with the artist in mind, their strengths and weaknesses? Their likes and dislikes? What can you tell us about working with Roberto De La Torre on this project?

Not particularly. But I've liked what I've seen. Some of it has really been excellent. Roberto and I are just at the beginning of our working relationship so it's hard to say much about it, but so far it's been great. We haven't had a lot of communication, but again that can and probably will change.

Milligan run starts with the 13X issue included with this magazine and continues on with issue 13 coming out December 4th, 2013.



BOOM! BOX AND *THE MIDAS FLESH*

by Gavin Lees

From relatively humble beginnings in 2005, Boom! Studios has gone from strength to strength. This last year has been something of an annus mirabilis for the publisher, having A-list creators like George Perez sign exclusive contracts with them, and publishing new material from likes of Mike Carey and Clive Barker — talents that would normally seem at home with one of the bigger publishers.

2013 also saw the release of a movie adaptation of Steven Grant's *2 Guns* with Mark Wahlberg and Denzel Washington — to largely favourable reviews — and an even greater leap into the world of cinema with an exclusive "first look" deal with 20th Century Fox Pictures. The deal could spell a raft of adaptations of Boom! comics, as well as a major in-road to creator fairness in the movie world, as Fox is offering the publisher and creators first-dollar gross on any completed productions. Boom! will also be allowed access to Fox's properties as sources for future comic franchises. In what has often been a contentious relationship between comics and Hollywood, this could be the start of some very healthy synergy between the two.

Indeed, if there's one area in which Boom! has had significant success, it's media adaptations. Its KaBoom! all-ages line has had hit after hit with comic versions of cartoon shows like *Adventure Time*, *Regular Show*, and *Bravest Warriors*. Not only have these sold by the truck-load, but they've gained an impressive amount of critical praise and won their creators several industry plaudits, including Eisner and Harvey awards. While these might be considered "safe" properties — with an already loyal fanbase built in — KaBoom! has also pushed into genre-defining territory with works like Roger Langridge's *Snarked*, and *Fairy Quest* by Paul Jenkins and Humberto Ramos.

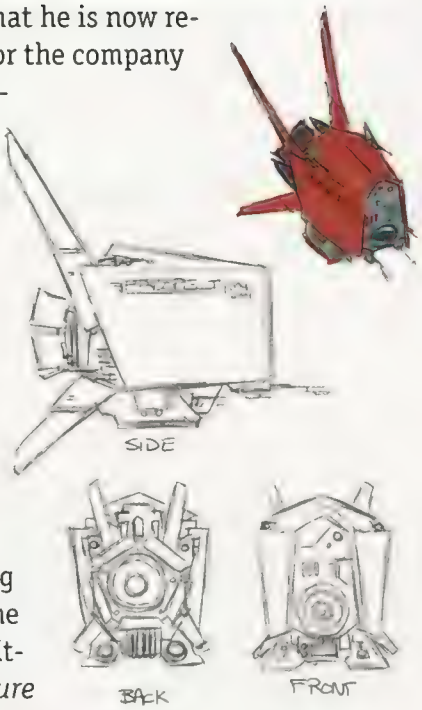
It seemed only natural for the company to expand but, in a somewhat surprising move, they purchased Archaia Entertainment — a company who occupied very similar territory to Boom! with adaptations of media properties, and creator-owned genre work. What made sense was the fact the Archaia had close ties with the Henson company, licensing the likes of *Fraggle Rock* and *The Storyteller*, as well as adapting Jim Henson's unpublished screenplay *A Tale of Sand* as a graphic novel. Boom! had previously held the rights to publish *The Muppets*, until Disney acquired Marvel and the rights were lost in that game of corporate musical chairs. Boom! knew

how to do right by Henson's work — Roger Langridge's run on *The Muppet Show* being one of the finest blends of a creator's and a property's sensibilities — and it would be expected that they can bring that same magic to Archaia.

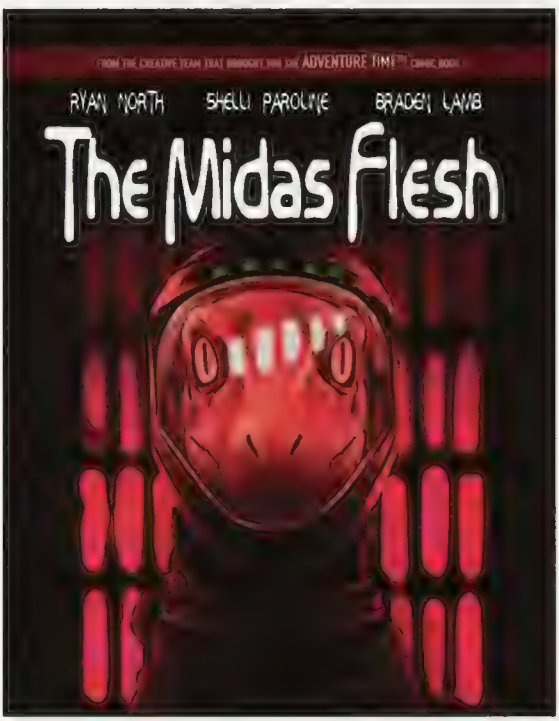
Even given all these developments and expansions, Boom! shows no sign of slowing down. In September, they announced the launch of a new imprint, Boom! Box. The line is down to the work of editor Shannon Watters, whose work on the *Adventure Time* books ushered in a wealth of talent from the world of webcomics — creators who had success and fandom that existed largely outside of direct-market comics at the time — who managed to elevate the series to the success it became. Naturally, many of these writers and artists have stories outside of the Land of Ooo that they wanted to tell, which is where Boom! Box comes in — think of it as Vertigo for the Tumblr generation.

The inaugural title for the new line is *The Midas Flesh* from the creative team behind *Adventure Time*: writer Ryan North, and artists Shelli Paroline and Braden Lamb. The basic premise behind the series considers what would happen if the myth of King Midas was not only true, but drawn to its logical conclusion. If everything Midas touched turned to gold, then eventually he would destroy the planet by simply placing his feet on the ground. In the far future, Midas's body is sought out in order to be used as a planet-destroying weapon, as even the smallest piece of his flesh would carry the destructive power of his curse.

If this seems a bit familiar, that's because it was the premise of one of North's *Dinosaur Comics* strips. This is his long-running webcomic where three dinosaurs talk philosophically, and every strip repeats the same six panels of art, and yet never seems to grow repetitive. Having run for over 10 years now, it was both North's first foray into comics, and also the work that landed him at Boom! That he is now revisiting it for the company gives a natural sense of having come full-circle.



To find out more about the new series, I spoke with North during his downtime between writing *Adventure Time*, keeping up with his daily *Dinosaur Comics*, and working on a choose-your-own-adventure version of *Romeo and Juliet* (a follow-up to his chooseable-path *Hamlet* that raised over half-a-million dollars on Kickstarter). He's quite the busy fellow.



THE PREMISE FOR YOUR NEW COMIC COMES FROM AN OLD DINOSAUR COMIC OF YOURS. OF ALL THE IDEAS THAT YOU'VE HAD T-REX AND CO LAY OUT, WHAT WAS IT ABOUT THAT ONE THAT HAD YOU COMING BACK FOR MORE?

I actually started working on the long-form comic shortly after I wrote the short-form *Dinosaur Comics* version of it. If you read the alt text on that comic you can see me getting really excited about the idea and the possibilities! So I ran with it. Then when the issue was done, I thought "I would like to get this made!" but it didn't end up coming together for a bunch of very boring reasons. Then, years later, Boom! said, "Hey Ryan, do you have any comic ideas you'd be interested in exploring?" and I got to be the guy who says, "Well, actually, I've got this script ready to go..."

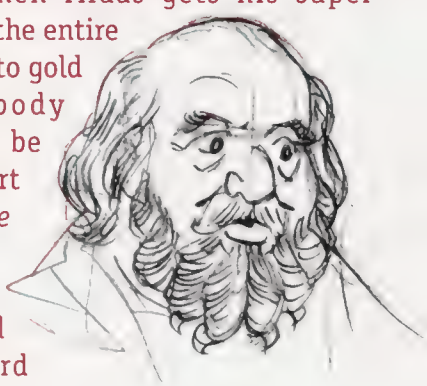
Of course, since then, I've rewritten that script almost entirely. I wrote it years ago and Past Ryan was not as good as Present Ryan!

LIKE A LOT OF GREAT SCI-FI IDEAS, IT TAKES A SMALL IDEA AND STRETCHES IT TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION. WAS IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE THE PREMISE MALLEABLE ENOUGH TO WORK INTO A NARRATIVE? DID YOU DO ANY RESEARCH TO FIND OUT HOW IT MIGHT ACTUALLY WORK IN PRACTICE?

The premise is super fun and not at all hard to work with — it's what drives so much of the story, actually! And in terms of research, I actually talked to my friend Ben Tippett about how it might work. Ben's great: he's the guy who can use physics to explain anything (I'm not lying!) and he's the guy who came up with a way to explain Superman's powers using just a single physical cheat (or superpower) — that he's able to manipulate the inertia of matter — which, I'll say it, is brilliant. We chatted for a while and came up with a way for "touch turns everything to gold" to all make sense. And the great thing about having this explanation in my back pocket is it gives rules, which I find really useful in storytelling and particularly in science fiction. Rules stop everything from being magic.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE THIS ITS OWN COMIC, RATHER THAN WORK IT INTO *ADVENTURE TIME*? IT SEEMS THAT COMIC'S DARKLY CUTE SENSIBILITY WOULD FIT WELL WITH THIS PREMISE.

Well, when Midas gets his superpower the entire planet turns to gold and everybody dies, so it'd be a pretty short *Adventure Time* comic. Probably too short. I could see Pen Ward not being happy



with me turning Finn and Jake into gold statues.

The only preview art I've seen for the series features a dinosaur in a space suit. Was the series not high concept enough already? Can you tell us more about space dinosaurs?

After the planet turns to gold, it is explored in the distant future by some people, one of whom is a dinosaur in a space suit. I mean technically it's not a dinosaur since it's from space but I figure, if anything, "space dinosaur" is even more alluring than "regular, earth-bound dinosaur."

If this Greek Myth is all-too true in the comic, will we see any other stories or figures from ancient mythology brought into the real world?

Yeah, there are a few of the Greek Greatest Hits that make an appearance too. Those guys are crazy! The Greek myths are crazy. Did you know there's a second half to the Midas story that involves him getting donkey ears and people whispering secrets into holes? It's nuts. I'm probably not going to involve donkey ears in this story, but on the other hand, it's really alluring to consider giving everyone donkey ears in this story.

What other details should we know about the world you've created?

I'm trying to treat the whole "Midas touch" thing as seriously and as scientifically as possible, which is a lot of fun. Basically, you've got this flesh that can turn any matter into gold: one tiny piece can destroy a planet — has destroyed a planet. That's got to be the most powerful weapon ever created. There's got to be a lot of very different people who would love to get control of that.

You're working on this series with your *Adventure Time* partners Shelli Paroline and Braden Lamb, so can we expect a similar aesthetic to the comics, or will readers be pleasantly surprised?

Surprises! So many surprises! Unless you are expecting "only the most awesome of things" in which case, no surprises.

Can you talk a little about the relationship you have with your collaborators and why you felt they would be right to bring on board here?

They're so good. So good. With *Adventure Time* they take my scripts and elevate them, and then when the comic comes out it's this really great thing and everyone says "Good work on that, Ryan!" and I get the credit for the changes they've made to my script, which is... nice? It's nice when everyone thinks you're better than you are. But the relationship we have — where we both feel completely free to suggest changes — means that the final result is better than either of us could produce on our own. It's basically the best kind of collaboration!

Considering the success you've had as an independent creator, why did you decide to take this series to a publisher?

The fact that they came to me was great! Plus we've had a great relationship with *Adventure Time*, and their plans for the Boom! Box are really exciting. It was basically a case of "Can we do this? We can?! Why aren't we doing this??"

Your work on *Adventure Time* has been highly lauded, and has won you several industry awards. Has this given you confidence to try new things and branch out from the style your known for?

It's awesome to get the awards for sure! But I'm not sure how much of an effect it has on confidence. To me the awards say,"Hey, your peers and audience love this work" and that's less confidence and more, "Aww, comics is awesome, everyone in comics is awesome." Any insecurities I had have been drummed out of me from doing *Dinosaur Comics* for ten years: all my early mistakes and awkwardness are archived online there in the first few years, forever. You have to trust that what you're putting up (or printing out) is good because you're happy with it, which makes "don't publish anything you're not happy with" the most important creative rule I have.

Once this mini-series is over, do you have any other ideas that you'd like to bring to Boom! Box? Are there any webcomics artists out there that you'd particularly like to work with?

Haha, all of them I think? There's so much talent out there. Right now my focus is on making *The Midas Flesh* the best it can be, but after that I'm sure there's some other ideas that could be explored. Heck, I could spend the rest of my life making T-Rex's crazy ideas a reality and still never catch up. Dude takes a day to throw out an idea like "machine of death" or "King Midas done realistically and he destroys the Earth in a second" and I have to spend years pushing them into reality.

***The Midas Flesh** is released this December by Boom! Box. The first issue features covers from John Keogh and Emily Partridge. The insides feature space dinosaurs.*

HOW TO MAKE MOVIES THE MARVEL WAY PART 2—*THOR: THE DARK WORLD*

With Marvel's Alan Taylor and Kevin Feige

by Brendon Connelly

It's a long, hard road from a brainstorming session at Marvel Studios to the silver screen, and for every *Thor* or *Captain America* that makes it, there's a *Runaways* or *War Machine* that doesn't. Or, perhaps more accurately, that hasn't made it just yet.

Using *Thor: The Dark World* as a case study, here's my investigation into how a Marvel idea makes its way from spark of inspiration to finished blockbusting spectacle. I spoke with Alan Taylor, the director of *The Dark World*, and Marvel honcho Kevin Feige. Most of this story is in their words, straight from their mouths.

Let's start at the very beginning - it's a very good place to start.

How does work on getting a Marvel movie going begin?

FEIGE: We have our internal brain trust in the studio made up of our executive producers at the studio itself and our creative committee with the publishing division guys, and together we come up with what we want to see. Some of these ideas you might see in two years and some you might never see. *Guardians of the Galaxy* was on our whiteboard six years ago. The whiteboard of today is pretty similar to that whiteboard of six years ago, and even the whiteboard of three years ago, but in about a year it's actually going to have to change dramatically because we'll have to decide what the two movies will be in 2016 and what the two movies will be in 2017.

We usually like to have at least the spine of the story, sometimes before we hire writers, most of the time before we

hire filmmakers. Not always, but most of the time. In this case, we did have a spine before Alan came on board. We had chosen Malekith as our villain and we knew that we wanted to explore Jane going to Asgard and we knew that we wanted to put Thor in a situation where he had no choice but to recruit Loki. We also knew that we wanted the finale of the film to take place on Earth, in large part because that would allow us to spend more time in the other worlds, which we wanted to do. Knowing it would all come back to a finale on Earth allowed a nice balance. That was, to my memory, what we had.

Alan Taylor recounted his own experience of getting to work before the shooting script was set in stone:

TAYLOR: In television the script is done and it's driving everything, but with this thing, I was not entirely joking to say the script was finished two weeks ago. Previs starts long before the shooting script is finished. You have to provide reference for all of these other departments; their trains are going to be leaving the station even though the script is still in flux.

There are different guys at Marvel and they each have different specialties. There's this one guy, Eric Carroll who really gets the comic universe. If you can't remember the name of something or when such and such an item was used, he's very good at that. And Kevin Feige himself, of course. He's very good at knowing what rings correct in the Marvel universe, which is very specific, and he's also the one who is carrying all of the movies in his head more than anybody else.

I can't give specifics but there were two things, one plot device that they said might step on their plans for the *Avengers* a little bit - it hadn't been written yet, but they were guessing it might. And there

was a casting thing, a guy I was suggesting for a role and they said "Ah, you probably shouldn't... we might want him for *The Avengers*."

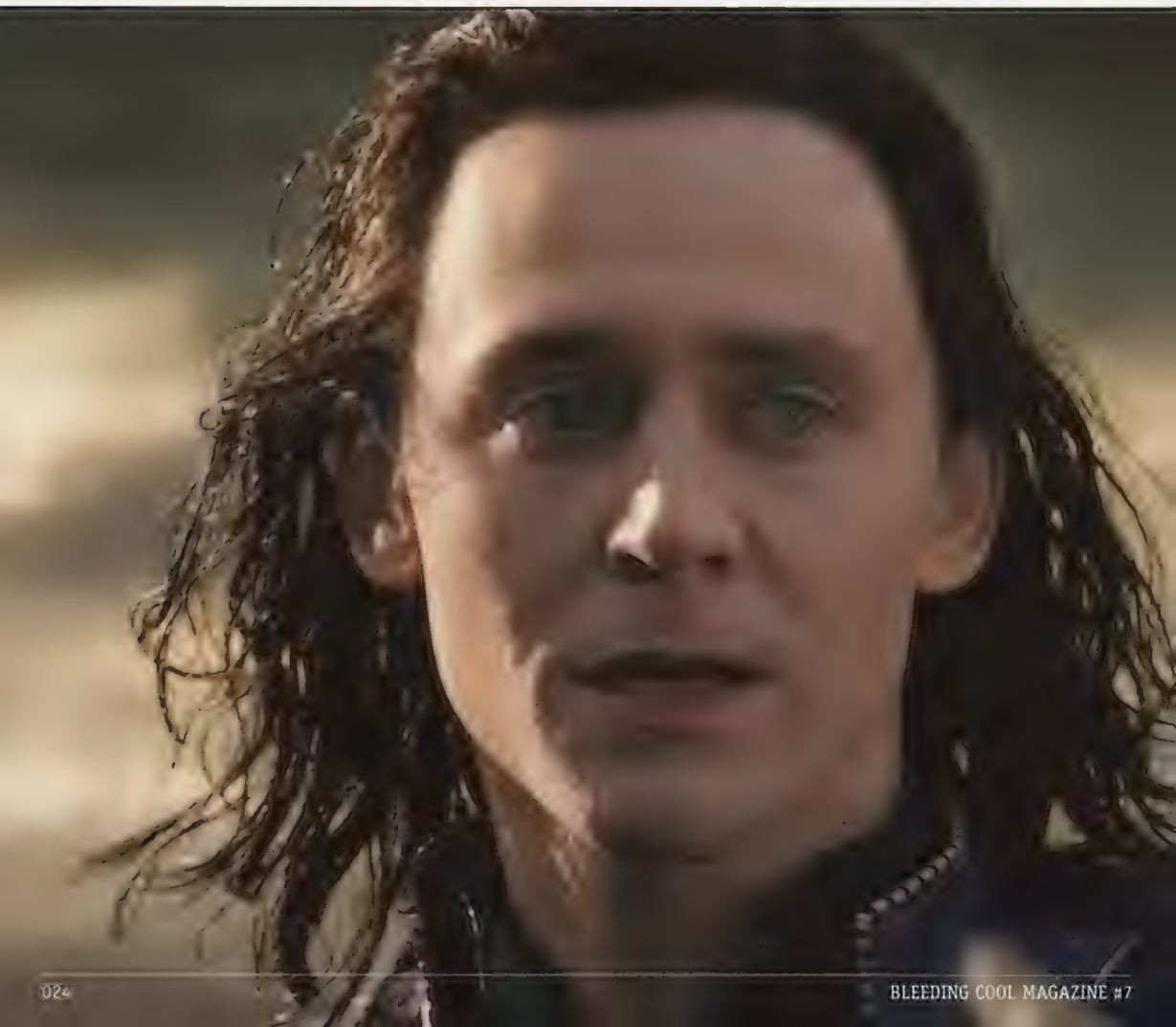
Feige couldn't recall these specific occasions, but did place them into the bigger context of working with Marvel Studios:

FEIGE: I'm sure there were many cases where we might have come to a fork in the road and said to Alan "Don't do that, do this," that's just the collaborative nature of working with us, we're such hands on creative producers. There wasn't any case of "I want Iron Man to come in here" and we said no - that never came up.

It's worth noting, I think, that Feige recently said in a live Google Hangout with Empire Magazine, "We do not give contractual final cut to any of our filmmakers... not something we'd be comfortable with." The studio is the auteur here. These films are products of the Marvel Studios System, something like the way Hollywood worked in its golden age, perhaps.

Alan did get to make some major contributions to the screenplay, however. Kevin explains one of the director's biggest changes:

FEIGE: I remember that we had not planned to use Erik Selvig, Stellan Skarsgard's character, but Alan had seen just *The Avengers* and he was like a kid in a candy store. He was watching *Avengers* saying "I get that villain, I get Loki, I get Thor,



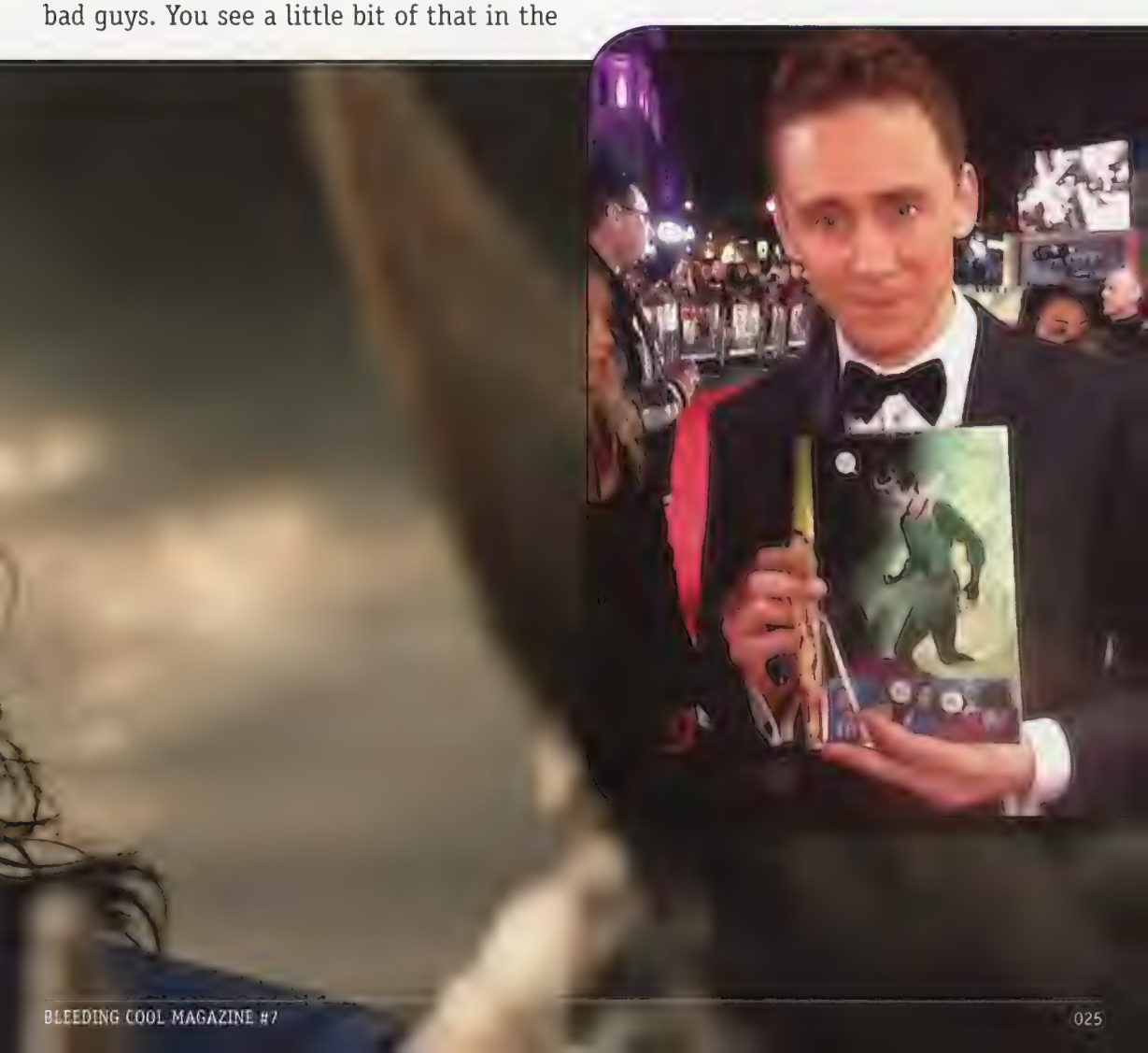
this is amazing, but what about that guy?" and we said "We love Selvig, he's great but where would we take him?"

Alan said, "We take him to a point where you see the ramifications of what Loki has done to him and you play the humour." It leads to some of the biggest laughs in the movie when you see Stellan running around, but that idea also tied us into the first movie, gave Jane a reason to be in London, which in turn gives us a different setting. We had already decided that we wanted to take them out of New Mexico and to come here to London and now we had a reason why.

Alan rightfully said, after seeing *Avengers*, that he didn't want the finale to be armies of Asgardians versus armies of bad guys. You see a little bit of that in the beginning but we wanted the finale to be more unique than that, to be fresh. That helped contribute to the idea of the convergence and Malekith and Thor popping in and out of different worlds.

Other times, Taylor admitted, his imagination wasn't quite in step with the beat of the Marvel Universe:

TAYLOR: I remember at one point I was putting all of these ravens around Odin. I knew Odin has ravens, but I hadn't realised that I was being too heavily influenced by *Game of Thrones*. I had to be told "Actually, Odin only has two ravens, they've got names and they're very specific" and so I had to take out nine ravens to get us back into the Thor universe.



My conversations with Taylor and Feige took place few days before the film's world premiere. As it turns out, they'd been working on refining the film until just a few short weeks before that. Here's Taylor's take on the eleventh hour polishing:

TAYLOR: The most stressful thing on the way in was that the script was in flux forever and on the way out, it was that there's a lot of moviemaking that gets done in post in the Marvel universe. We were shooting new material, taking things that had been not so featured and making them much more featured in additional scenes. We were actively creating the movie right down to the wire.

For example, in the original version of the last act, which I'm still much more in love with, the local kids spoke Farsi. I wanted to be true to contemporary London. We went into London into a community that had a lot of immigrant population, we had them speak Farsi to one another and then drop out of it. I loved that little bit of flavour and that was one of the delicious things that fell by the wayside during the post process.

Finally, I spoke to Feige about how the last shot of the film came about, and if it was designed to sew seeds for a future Thor story. Does Marvel already have a specific sequel in mind when they come up with their final, dramatic moments?

FEIGE: Sometimes that's the case but it's usually "What do we think would be the coolest way to end this movie?" I loved *Back to the Future* as a kid, I still love it, and "Where we're going, we don't need roads" was the greatest ending in all the world. It happened to go into *Back to the Future 2*, which I also liked, but was a perfect ending

to the first movie. Likewise, Tony Stark saying "I am Iron Man," was something we loved as an idea, as a capper, Tony being very Tony right up into the very last minute of his movie. The knock-on effect of this is that we didn't have to deal with the secret identity trope in the *Iron Man* franchise, we liked that we were separating ourselves from that. The end of *The Dark World* was intended simply to be what we thought of as a great capper to this story but it certainly gives us fodder to play with as we think of future movies as well.

That final shot in *Thor: The Dark World* is a hard-won pay-off to an extremely long and exhausting process. For you and me, however, it's as simple as buying a ticket and choosing a seat. It's easy sometimes to forget just how spoiled we are.

Thor: The Dark World is in cinemas around the world now. Thanks again to Alan Taylor and Kevin Feige for taking the time to talk to me.

THOR: THE DARK WORLD'S END CREDITS SURPRISE

By Rich Johnston

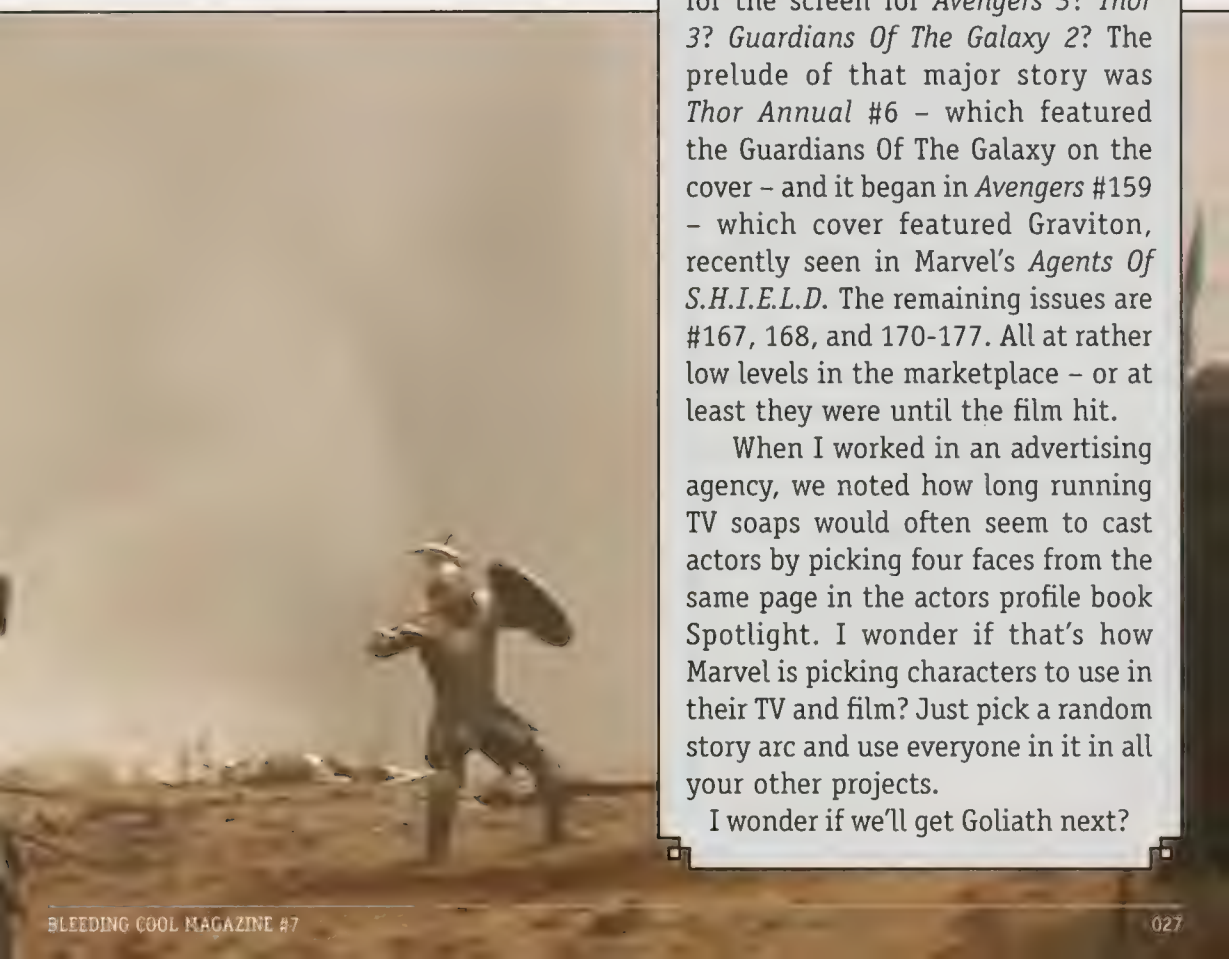
So, the end of *Thor: The Dark World* showed us The Collector. Now, when *Avengers* pulled this trick with Thanos, all early appearances of the character rocketed in value.

So, it's probably worth keeping an eye on *Avengers* #28, previously noted for the first appearance of Goliath. But also the first appearance of The Collector, a character who goes around the universe, collecting life forms for his museum planets.

Then with Thanos and The Collector both around, there's probably going to be interest in *The Korvac Saga*, a story they played a major part in. Could it being adapted for the screen for *Avengers 3*? *Thor 3*? *Guardians Of The Galaxy 2*? The prelude of that major story was *Thor Annual* #6 – which featured the Guardians Of The Galaxy on the cover – and it began in *Avengers* #159 – which cover featured Graviton, recently seen in Marvel's *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* The remaining issues are #167, 168, and 170-177. All at rather low levels in the marketplace – or at least they were until the film hit.

When I worked in an advertising agency, we noted how long running TV soaps would often seem to cast actors by picking four faces from the same page in the actors profile book Spotlight. I wonder if that's how Marvel is picking characters to use in their TV and film? Just pick a random story arc and use everyone in it in all your other projects.

I wonder if we'll get Goliath next?



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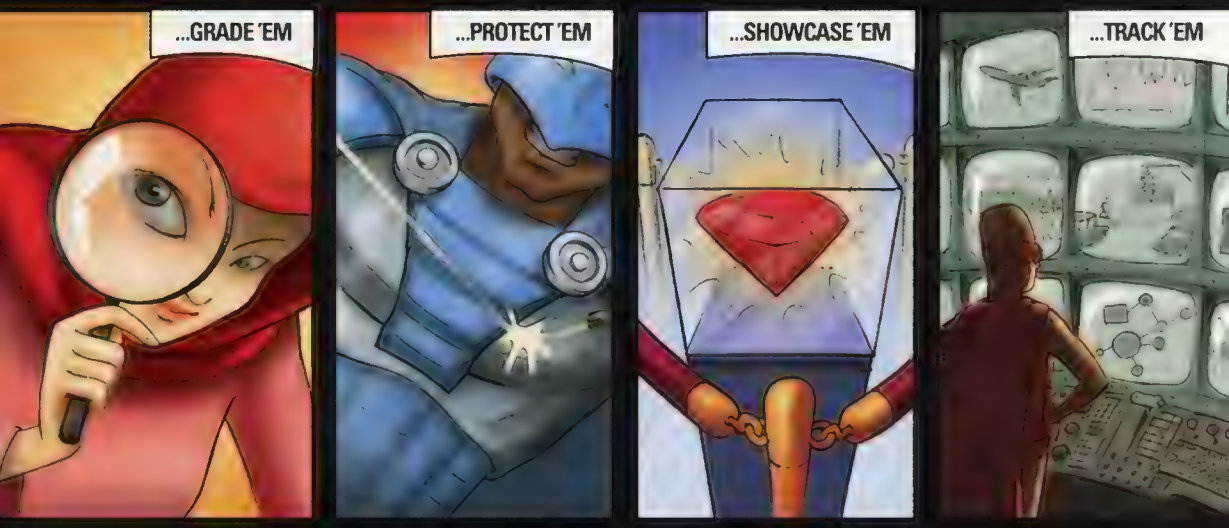

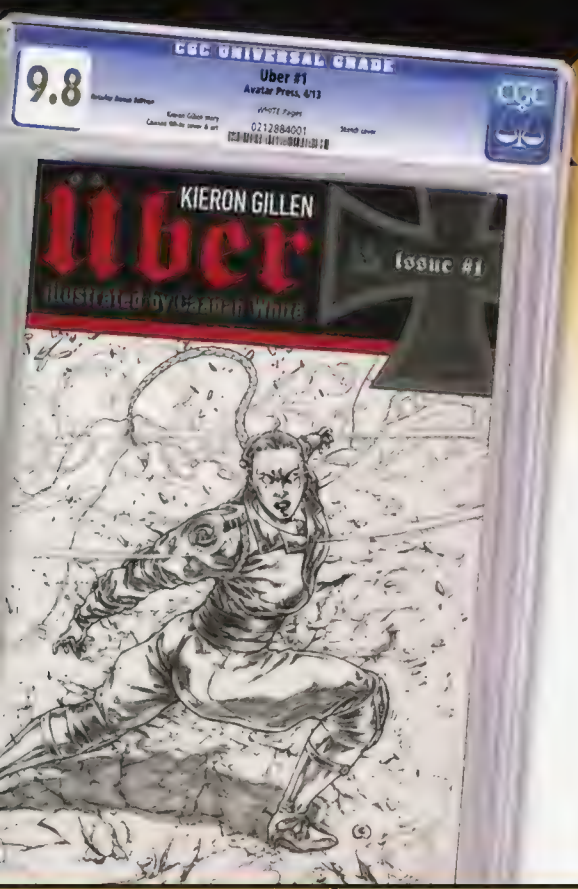

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DARK HORSE DELIVERS THE FIFTH BEATLE

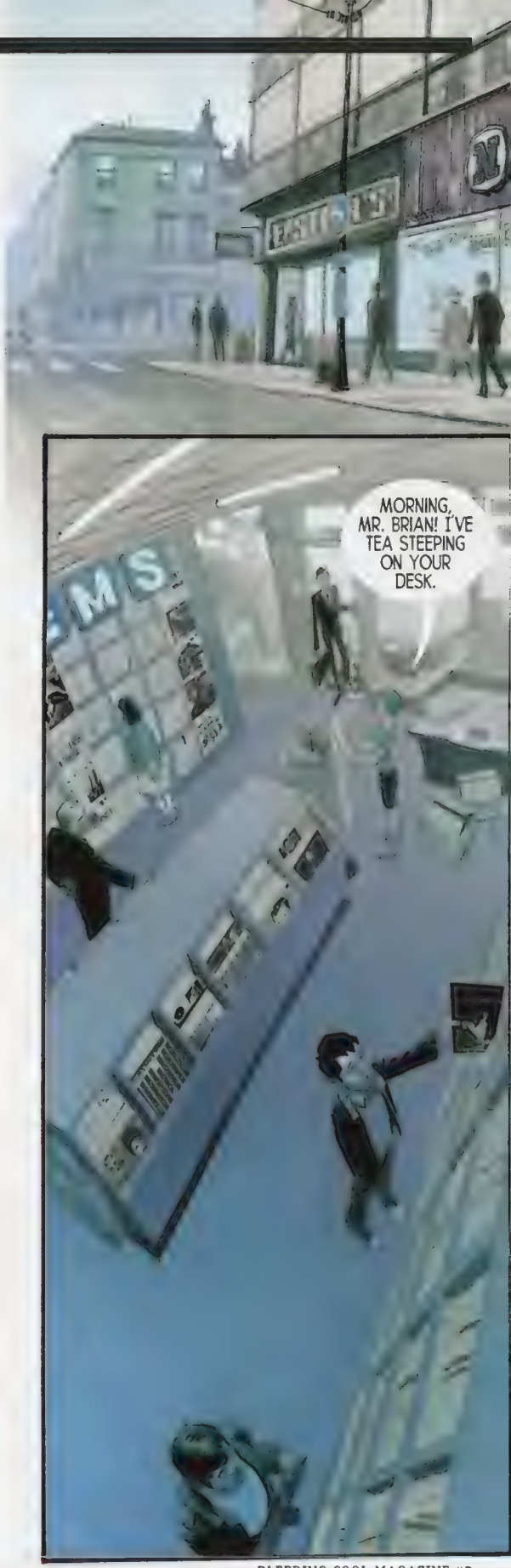
By Alex Wilson

DARK HORSE DELIVERS THE FIFTH BEATLE

By Alex Wilson

The 1960s was a period of growth for world culture. Elvis had hit the scene and dominated not just the American market but also the world, boasting a career in the realm of music and cinema. Cut to Liverpool, England, were a small local band called The Beatles plays the clubs populating this port town. Brian Epstein, the son of a local record storeowner, stumbles across the band one night and decides then and there they will be bigger than the most popular world artist, Elvis.

Vivek J. Tiwary, the writer behind *The Fifth Beatle*, a new graphic novel chronically the life of The Beatles' manager, Brian Epstein, and I discussed the process of creating this project. It is a venture which had populated his imagination and captured his attention for more than half his life. And seeing it go from an abstract idea of conjectured wish to an actual media entity, with not only a graphic novel but a movie with expectations to shoot next year, is the culmination of a lifetime of ambition.



TIWARY: "There are literally NO books about Brian Epstein in print; when *The Fifth Beatle* comes out on November 19, it will be the only one-- graphic novel or otherwise. And when I began my research-- 21 years ago-- there were also no online resources like YouTube or Wikipedia, which sadly is full of half-truths anyway. So most of the research I did for *The Fifth Beatle* came from personal, one-on-one interviews with people who knew Brian Epstein best-- and as a result, there truly are stories in [*The Fifth Beatle*] that haven't been told before...

Of particular help was Nat Weiss, the Beatles' U.S. attorney and Epstein's best friend and closest confidante. Nat is definitely one of the heroes of *The Fifth Beatle*.

E M S
Television
SALE
YOU'RE A GIFT, MOXIE.
BRIAN. HOW ARE YOU?
RECORDS ARE SELLING RELIABLY, DADDY.
I'M ASKING ABOUT *YOU*, NOT OUR RECORD STORE!
STEADY SUCCESS. AND THUS...RATHER DULL.
I'M LOOKING FOR A RECORD I CAN'T FIND ANYWHERE. THE BEATLES' "MY BONNIE."
GOOD CHOICE-- THE BEATS ARE *FAB!*
YOU STUMBLED HOME LATE AGAIN LAST NIGHT, AND YOU LOOK HURT. I'M JUST WORRIED--
EXCUSE ME, DADDY.

Sadly, Nat passed away on July 31. I had numerous conversations with Nat and was proud to know him. Also of great help was Sid Bernstein, the famous concert promoter who worked closely with Epstein to bring the Beatles' over to the United States. Like myself, Sid was a native and quintessential New Yorker, and I was lucky to have shared many meals with him over the years, asked him many questions about Brian, and heard many stories. Sadly, Sid too passed away-- just a few weeks ago [August 12, 1918-August 21, 2013.] He too will be missed. I'll also mention my gratitude for the friendship and input from Epstein's assistant and personal secretary Joanne Petersen, formerly Joanne Newfield in the 1960's), who despite living in Australia these days has always made herself available to me. Finally, I've had the good fortune to enjoy the support and feedback of the Brian Epstein estate, to whom I am also grateful."

The Fifth Beatle is a great example of non-traditional storytelling in the comic book medium. I love books that break the basic mold of the industry so many of us have devoted our lives to. Tiwary constructs a believable reflection of 1960s England and America. He weaves the inspiring story of Epstein between the folds of history, balancing his emotional inner thoughts and struggles with the living and breathing world around him.

TIWARY: "My background is in theater production for the past 14 years and before that I worked for record labels. I worked in the music industry and even though I was working for major record labels, my advice to bands was always do it yourself. I was a big champion of the whole DIY model. I grew up listening to a lot of punk rock and that was all about do it yourself. When you do a theater production, each production is a stand-alone entity.

That's the world I came from. So, when I knew I wanted to make *The Fifth Beatle* into a graphic novel the intention, if only because that's how I know to operate, was I'm going to make it myself.

Doing what I know how to do, I was like let me make the book physically and then Andrew [Robinson] and I will take it to a publisher. That's how I always advised bands. The technology is there to make your own album, just go out and make your own album."

Tiwary brings this DIY punk rock mentality to his project, refusing to share details about the upcoming film release if they aren't set in stone. When I talked to him, he told me there wasn't any information he could share about *The Fifth Beatle* film at this time, but only a few days later I received two separate press releases and a personal note from his assistant informing me Bruce Cohen (*American Beauty, Silver Linings Playbook*) will produce the film adaptation of *The Fifth Beatle*. Tiwary even recently acquired the rights to The Beatles music catalog for the film adaptation. Further, he states that *The Fifth Beatle* is the only project about the band in history to have acquired the music rights for a use in a film, pointing out along with the music rights he also has three rejection letters about the rights.

I asked Tiwary why he felt the forth time was the charm and he said, "The honest truth is I don't know. I would say it was perseverance. I just wouldn't take no for an answer."

Tiwary spent over twenty years researching the life of Epstein, eventually collaborating with Andrew Robinson and Kyle Baker to turn the story of Epstein's life into a graphic novel. Tiwary has been actively creating this biographical graphic novel over the past five years,he first intended to complete the book before finding a publisher but was floored by the enthusiasm of Mike Richardson, the president of Dark Horse and an avid Beatles fan, also noting the contributions of editor,

MR. BRIAN, WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE THE BEATLES' RECORD.
AND IT'S ON A GERMAN LABEL, RIGHT? I THINK THEY'RE CALLED "THE BEAT BROTHERS" ON THE RECORD.
"THE BEAT BROTHERS" ...?
BUT IT'S *THEM* I LIKE-- THE BEATLES ARE *GORGEOUS!*
THANK GOD.
INDEED? WHY DO YOU SAY?
YOU'VE NEVER SE
BEATLES?! THEY'RE
GROUP LIVERPOOL'S
THEY'RE ALWAYS
CAVERN ROUNI
CORNER!
WELL, THE
ISN'T THE SORT
TYPICALLY FREQU
I AM INTRIGUED.
YOU COULD HELI
MAKE THE NE
ARRANGEM

WE MUST. POPULAR LOCAL BAND.
THE RECORD'S BY TONY SHERIDAN, REALLY. THE BEATS ARE BACKING HIM.
WELL. IT IS A STRICT STORE POLICY THAT WE WILL LOCATE *ANY* RECORD FOR *ANY* CUSTOMER. MOXIE, PLEASE PUT "MY BONNIE" ON ORDER.
EEN THE THE BEST GOT--AND AT THE D THE
CAVERN OF CLUB I ENT...THOUGH DO YOU THINK ME GET IN? CESSARY IENTS?
WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE?

Phillip Simon. Richardson has tried in the past to put out a Beatles graphic novel or comic book, but none of the projects came to the final publication stage.

RICHARDSON: "I am a huge Beatles fan and we've had several aborted Beatles projects over the years, most notably a retelling of *The Yellow Submarine* film in comic book form. It was done in the 60s when the film first came out. We had tried to do a new version of that. For some reason half way through the project the people we were licensing from decided that it wasn't appropriate so that project went by the way side. We've had a couple other instances where we were trying to get Beatles projects up and then Vivek [Tiwary] came to me pitched this idea he had and I was all for it right away. It was a great idea. It was telling The Beatles story through Brian Epstein's eyes and it was probably more about Brian Epstein than it was about the actual Beatles, how he learned about them, how he went and saw them, and had the epiphany that this band was an amazing group. We say at numerous times that Paul McCartney has said on occasions that Brian Epstein was *'The Fifth Beatle.'*"

Richardson fell in love with Tiwary's script and brought the project to Dark Horse even though only a few of the pages from the book had been completed. Richardson describes himself as a Beatles fan, noting the first time he ever heard of the band.

RICHARDSON: "I can remember when I was just a kid, I believe it was on a summer day. You may or may not know. There was a news show in America that everybody watched. It was called *Huntley Brinkley* and they would always have a human-interest story at the end of the show. On this particular day they showed these long lines outside this place, now I assume that was The Cavern [a popular place in Liverpool for The Beatles to play in their early years], I didn't know at the time,

but there were long lines out to see this group called The Beatles so I did remember the name The Beatles because it seemed so odd at the time, I mean we were listening to Elvis Presley and Ricky Nelson and The Four Seasons and a group named The Beatles caught my attention, so I watched the screen and saw this huge line and all these girls that were interested in getting inside so that was the first time I knew of them..."

I've had a chance to read *The Fifth Beatle* and I fell in love, too. I've never been the largest Beatles fan in the world. The most exposure I've ever had to the band was in the 8th grade when my English teacher spent the entire class period on Halloween showing us all the evidence pointing to the fact Paul McCartney was actually dead and had been replaced by a look-a-like, playing all the lyrics eluding to the myth, and showing sub textual meanings on the album covers.

You don't have to be a Beatles fan to love the story of Brian Epstein, though. Most people can identify with his struggle. He was gay, Jewish, and from Liverpool. I may be none of those things, but I can sympathize with the feeling of being ostracized from what society would consider "normal."

Tiwary constructed not only an amazing story about a man who hasn't gotten his due from history, but also conveys Epstein as a person and not just a character. By the end of the book you feel you have an understanding of who this man was, not just the action he took on his journey through life. By the end, you know who Brian Epstein was and how vital his contributions were to The Beatles.

THE COUNSELLOR
by Brendon Connelly

On its hard, brittle surface, Ridley Scott's *The Counsellor* would seem to be a very straightforward moral lesson, a sleek, tightly wound account one man's descent into hell on the back of a single, terrible decision. I could tell you that there's a lot more beneath the surface, but that would almost be missing the point. In this film, as with the best of Scott's previous work, there's no real distinction between style and substance.

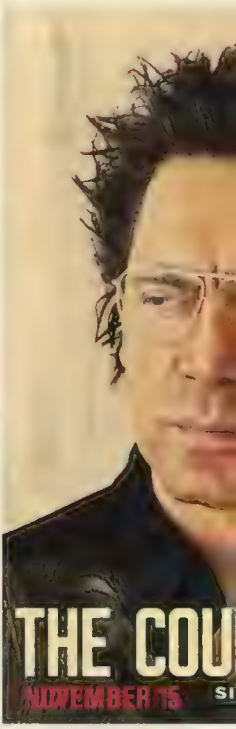
The Counsellor is a very verbose film, Cormac McCarthy's screenplay proving very literary in both its density of text and choice of language. I'd guess that half of its scenes at least are structured as two-handed dialogues, many of them rather extended, some of them rather oblique. But while all of this talk is going on, Scott is filling the frame with texture, with extra information, with design.

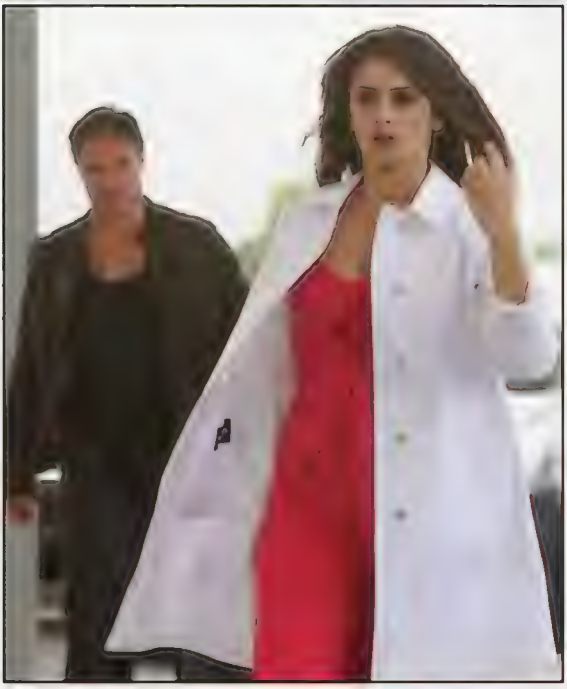
The clothes, the set dressing, and the lighting are all crucial in conveying this film's real mysteries, and then ultimately in unraveling them. Think of how design was at the heart of *Alien, Blade Runner,* or even *American Gangster* and *Matchstick Men* and you'll get some idea of Scott's approach to what could have been a rather static, stop-start, uncinematic screenplay.

Remarkably, there's almost nothing in the whole movie filmed on a set, with almost every shot located in a specifically, carefully chosen location. I spoke to Scott about his decision making process here, in selecting locations for the scenes set both in the realms of privilege and then the dirtier ones, taking place down by the border.

RIDLEY SCOTT: I'm originally an art director at heart, so I'm an environmentalist who needs to know everything about a location. And I've got this funny brain, this photographic memory. I went to El Paso and Juárez all by myself when I was a kid, I think back in 1961, I was stupid enough to cross the border, all by myself in a Greyhound bus - never do it, but it was the cheapest way to go around. I got off the bus in El Paso and stayed in the Greyhound Bus Hotel, if you can imagine what that is like. I got a taxi driver - his name was Art Garcia, I'll never forget that - and asked "Can you take me across the border?"

As soon as I got across the border,





electricity stopped, everything went black, and there were just gas-lit lamps and oil-lit lamps. He took me to a bar... and all of that, everything I saw that night, these things sink in. I saw the seamy side of the evolution and development of every country, where every country in the world is getting screwed by development, except perhaps the United States.

There's a great similarity to the landscape in Spain and those parts of the US I wanted to set the scenes in. I didn't want it to look beautiful, I wanted it to be kind of aggressive. I wanted wires and pylons on what were once beautiful desertscapes. Those details are as important as one of the characters in the movie.

The Counsellor is, for all of its dense, actor-testing scenes of long, subtext-heavy conversations, far more cinematic than it is theatrical.

When it comes to showcasing Ridley Scott's eye for subtle design details, it's at least as good as his more obviously sketched, built, and modeled *Prometheus*.

The Counsellor opened in the US in October and in the UK on November 15th. See it on a big screen if you can.

"IF ANYONE WAS THE FIFTH BEATLE, IT WAS BRIAN."
—Paul McCartney

THE FIFTH BEATLE

THE BRIAN EPSTEIN STORY

VIVEK J. TIWARY ANDREW C. ROBINSON WITH KYLE BAKER

The Fifth Beatle is the untold true story of Brian Epstein, the visionary manager who discovered and guided the Beatles. Available in a regular hardcover edition, a collector's edition, and a limited edition with bonus material.

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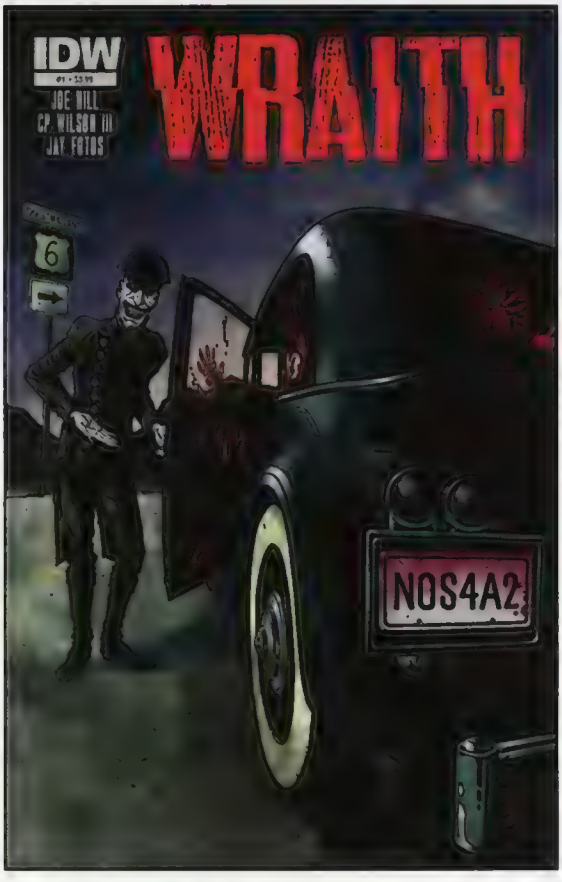
THE PULL LIST
by James Kuhoric

The holidays are here. By the time this hits stores folks will be finishing up their turkey and stuffing and heading full steam into the Christmas and New Year frenzy. This is the time of year to really reflect on the things in life that matter. Not the lousy job, the jerks in line around you at the mall, or the many slights that aggravate over the course of the year, but those things that you really appreciate about your life and the ways that you can add to your happiness in the upcoming New Year. I love this season for what it is – a time to reinvent and enjoy the things that get pushed to the side in the hustle and bustle of everyday survival.

And with holiday time off and the zen that comes with it, I present to you this year end edition of *The Pull List* that details some of the books I'm most looking forward to this winter. These are comics that will help make those silent nights into ones filled with comic book goodness. There are many great comics out there…but these are a few the most anticipated ones from my November and December wish list.

Wraith: Welcome to Christmasland #1

It is no secret that I love good horror comics. And it doesn't get much better than giving New York Times Bestselling author, Joe Hill, a chance to expand the world of his latest novel, *NOS4A2* in an original comic book miniseries. *Locke & Key* may be over, but Hill delivers another incredibly dark and imaginative story as he takes the readers to Christmasland, a dreadful place where evil thrives by leeching the life from children. For those who have read Hill's novels, you know to expect something that will pull you kicking and screaming from your safe zone and throw you headfirst into a surreal nightmare. There are very few creators that can pull off the kind of storytelling horrors



that Hill is capable of. But pairing him with artist Charles P. Wilson III of *Stuff of Legend* fame is the perfect complement for a new nightmare just before Christmas. And this is one series I plan on reading by the fireplace with the iron poker within arm's grasp to fend off holiday terrors.

Love It: The perfect creative team and a vision to fill your holidays with dread.

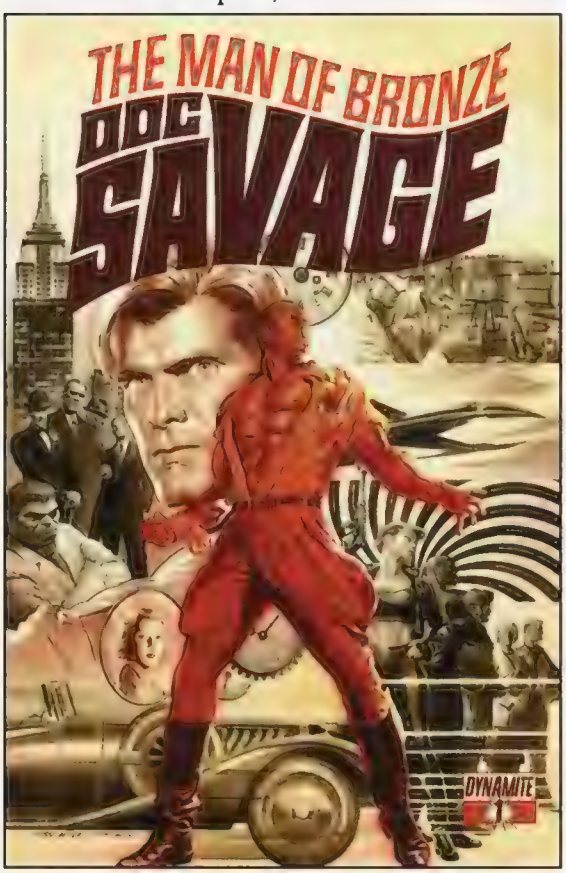
Hate It: Can anyone capture images vibrant enough to convey the true frights from Hill's novel? I think Wilson can.

Honorable Mention (Holiday Horrors): *Krampus #1* – The land of misfit legends is here just in time to give us a dark comedy based around the myth of the Krampus. What can

I say? It's described as "Snake Plissken by way of the Grinch." I'm going into this like I go into most movies now-a-days...it doesn't have to be great, it just has to entertain me.

Doc Savage #1

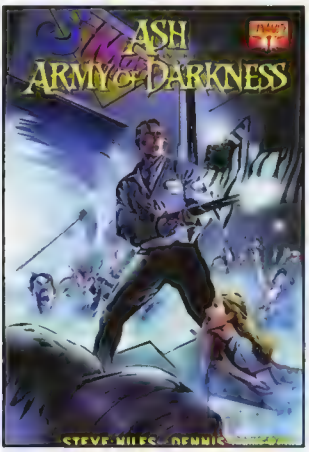
This is the holiday gift that you hope for as you are opening your presents...the one you really wanted but weren't sure you'd get. I've written before about pulp heroes – The Shadow, The Rocketeer, and The Spirit are among my favorites...but as much as I love those characters, there is only one Doc Savage. Dynamite Entertainment has really carved out a niche with these characters and this latest series looks to be the pinnacle of their line. Sporting an incredible Alex Ross cover with Chris Roberson writing and Bilquis Everly illustrating, the new series promises to be faithful to all the things that made Doc Savage special. And if their work on the other pulp characters is any indicator of what to expect, this could be the best version we've seen in comics to date.



Love It: Dynamite is the right home for Doc Savage – they get pulp heroes and have been doing them justice from day one.

Hate It: This has to be special. The creative team must make something that captures the magic of the character or it could go bad really fast.

Honorable Mention (Licensed): *Ash and the Army of Darkness* – A couple issues will be out by the holidays, but I've always loved the character, the movies, and the comics. I'm particularly excited to see Steve Niles' take on this property. They are touting the return to extreme horror with black comedy (the right recipe in my humble opinion) and the art by Denis Calero seems to really embrace the vibe. Don't muck it up, you primitive screwheads.



Origin II #1

Kieron Gillen has won me over and is the real reason that I am excited to see this new series. The first *Origin* was a bit of a letdown, despite the incredible art by Adam Kubert which made it visually masterful. But with Gillen in charge of the story, I feel like this sequel is going to be far better than we could hope for. After reading *Journey into Mystery, Iron Man,* and *Uber*, I am sold on Gillen's ability to take a topic and make it fresher than it's ever been. This has the potential to be a pivotal storyline in a long history of one of Marvel's greatest heroes. I want this to be *the* Wolverine story. Don't let us down, Kieron.

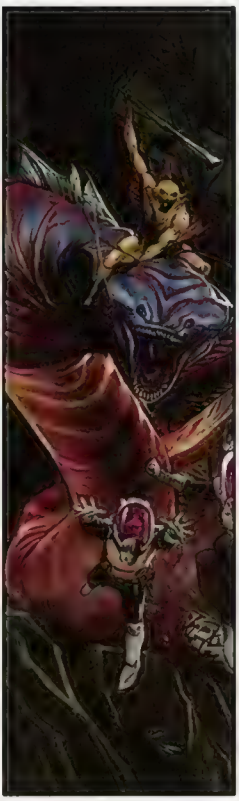
Love It: There is no one in comics right now that could do this better than Kieron Gillen.

Hate It: Wolverine has legions of fans.

Falling short of the high level they deserve and expect would be devastating.

Honorable Mention (Superheroes): *Unity* – This is another early fall release that will have a few issues out by the holidays. But in much the way that *Origin* has to be good, *Unity* too has to raise the bar to a new level. The reimagined Valiant universe has been one of the best stories in comics of the past few years. Matt Kindt and Doug Braithwaite need to not only jump over the high bar set for the Valiant line, but really annihilate it for fans to be content. I love the new premise and am hoping it is the beginning of something even bigger for the Valiant U.

Those are the books I'm adding to my pull list this holiday season. Here are a few others I'll be watching out for as well:



Black Science #1 – This series looks fantastic! It is one part one part *Creepy/Eerie*, one part *Heavy Metal*, and all awesome.

Black Kiss Christmas Special – Hey now! If you've been naughty this is the book for you. Howard Chaykin promises to deliver a dose of mischief to the holiday season this year.

Deceivers #1 – Steven Grant has a long history of telling crime stories that rock. This looks like another big-time winner.

Dead Body Road #1 – Image has become the home of original new programming – they're kind of like the AMC of comics. And *Dead Body Road* looks like Justin Jordan may be delivering the season's best new violent drama.

Ghost #1 – She's always been my favorite Dark Horse hero and with Kelly Sue DeConnick, Chris Sebela, Ryan Sook, and Terry Dodson putting it together, I am hoping this will be around for a very long time.

Justice League 3000 #1 – At first I wasn't really excited about this one, but when I found out it was Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis with Howard Porter, I turned around big time. With that creative team, I'm looking forward to what this alternate future holds for DC's big guns.

The Midas Flesh #1 – From the *Adventure Time* team of Ryan North, Shelli Paroline, and Braden Lamb comes a new vision about a space crew and their intelligent astronaut dinosaur. This just looks like a fun romp of a book that will make you smile when you read it.

Mr. Peabody & Sherman #1 – Jump in the WABAC machine and discover history through the eyes of an impressionable youth and a brilliant dog.

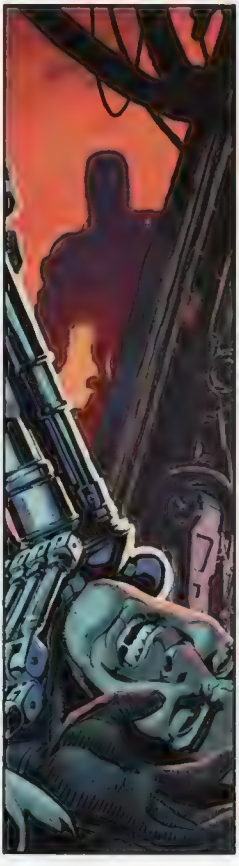
Peanuts #14 – Nothing says "holiday fun" like Charlie Brown and the Peanuts.

Robotech Voltron #1 – Anyone who knows me understands that I'm not a particularly big anime fan. But putting these classic properties together is a perfect mix.

Rover Red Charlie #1 – This one isn't fair because I've already read the script...and Garth Ennis fans are going to love this fresh new look at three canine best friends at the end of the world.

Teen Titans Go! #1 – You can't watch the Cartoon Network series and not chuckle – this is a wonderful all ages book that will truly delight fans everywhere.

Terminator Salvation: The Final Battle #1 – There have been a lot of *Terminator* comics over the years – some good and some not so good. But none have ever promised to give us a glimpse of the final fate of John Connor. Add to that J. Michael Straczynski spinning the yarn and I'm in for the ride.

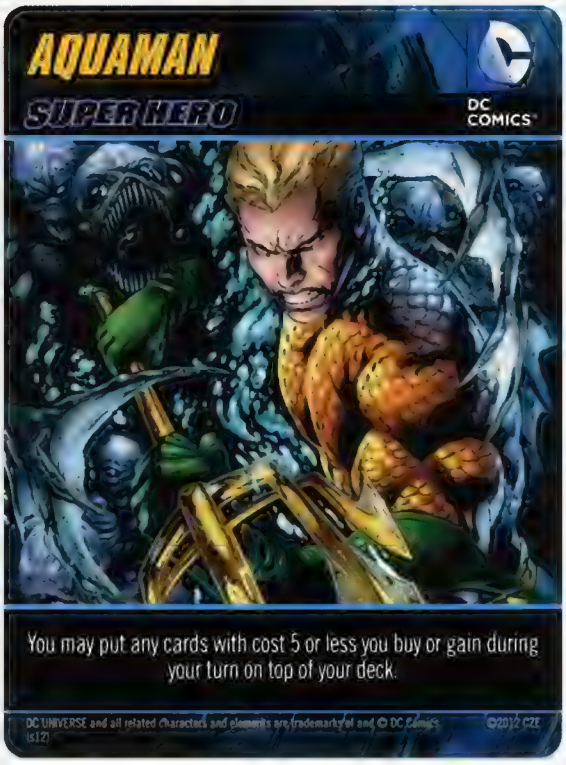


Star Trek Annual 2013 – Old school alert! IDW put together a "fotonovel" sequel to one of the original Trek adventures. Beam me up, Scotty!

GAMING GURUS:
THE DC DECK-BUILDING GAME REVIEW
by Tom Mitchell

Bam! Pow! Zock! If you are a comic book fan, those words stir up the images of DC's classic *Batman* television series and the fondly crafted *Batman 66* comic series. And with those images comes the wealth of bad guys from the DC universe. For gamers that want the experience of facing some of the cruelest and most colorful villains in all the comic universes, look no further than Cryptozoic's DC Deck-Building Game, a 2-5 player game that can be set up to play in as little as 30 minutes.

Unfamiliar with how a deck-building game works exactly? Have no fear...this is the perfect product for you to get started with! DC Deck-Building easily allows even the most inexperienced gamer to catch on quickly, yet also provides plenty of depth and strategy to keep veterans engaged and coming back for more.



All players start the game with the same 5-card hand and choose a popular superhero from within the DC Universe, each displaying a different ability and/or advantage. Players then take turns accumulating power using cards from their hand in order to select better and more powerful cards from the community pool, further enhancing their deck. With enough power, players will eventually attempt to take down dastardly DC Supervillains from the Supervillain stack!

BANE
VILLAIN
+2 Power
Attack: Each foe chooses and discards a card
4
LASSO OF TRUTH
EQUIPMENT
+1 Power
Defense: You may discard this card to avoid an Attack. If you do, draw a card
2
RA'S AL GHUL
VILLAIN
SUPER-VILLAIN
+3 Power
At the end of your turn, put this card on the bottom of its owner's deck before drawing a new hand.
(This card starts the game on top of the Super-Villain stack.)
8

Each card has a victory point value that is tallied up at the end of the game once all of the Villains selected for that session have been defeated. Defeating as many villains as possible before the stack has been depleted is certainly a great strategy for scoring victory points, but it is not the only way to wind up on top. Certain cards provide bonus points for collecting equipment or acquiring regular villains and there are even cards such as 'Weakness' that stick you with negative victory points if they end up in your deck at the end of the game.

Players will seek to build their deck and pay close attention to how they go about increasing their own power, but they also have to be aware of what their opponents are attempting to build and look to deny them access to certain cards at key times. Weighing those types of decisions throughout the game, at a fast pace, can really test even the most advanced players. This is truly where the game shines and instills genuine excitement for folks, who will want to play the game again and again!

Cryptozoic has recently announced that they are offering DC Deck-Building Game Day Kits for tournament play to hobby shops. Be sure to contact your local store to find out if they are participating in this exciting Organized Play opportunity. There is also an expansion/stand-alone for the game, Heroes Unite, arriving in Q4 2013. Game on Gamers!

Bleeding Cool Magazine gives the DC Deck Building Game 4.5 out of a possible 5 Stars for its ease of play and variety of content.

THE TOP 100 POWER LIST OF COMIC BOOKS

By Rich Johnston

Welcome to the second Top 100 Power List, attempting to measure and quantify the various levels of power within the English speaking comic book industry.

The one thing I can be sure of is that no one reading this will agree with it. I am expecting to be told how wrong I am about everything. And that's partly the point, to encourage debate and discussion, but also as a record of how these things can be seen, from a certain perspective, at a certain time. Next month, it will all have changed again. I have discussed the names on the list with many prominent people, taken readings from those both on the list and not, but in the end, the final call is mine.

I've had to balance the measurement of actually-used power, as opposed to someone in a position of power, but who doesn't use much. There's also commitment to the medium for an executive – if they were fired, how much of that power in the comics industry would they retain? Which is why, commonly on the list, some underlings have more power than their bosses. And there are people not in comics, but whose actions and decisions effect the comics, massively. Every time, it's a judgement call.

So Jim Lee and Isaac Perlmutter both slip down the list from their top spots last year. Dan Buckley zooms into the top ten to the very top. We explain why. Jonathan Hickman and Scott Snyder rise and Karen Berger drops out completely. Though, as I'm writing it, I'm already hearing rumours...

But that will be for next year's list. And despite losing Karen, there are more women on the list this year. Not many, this is not some Road To Damascus moment, but it is a reflection of a gradually changing industry – albeit still too little, too late. There remains only one African American person on the list however, and it's the same guy who was on it last year. Again, this list doesn't attempt to lead the industry but reflect it, warts and all. Which is why it is still mostly a list of fat white guys with facial hair.

Including me.

Welcome to the Power List 2013...

Rich Johnston
London, November

01 **DAN BUCKLEY** has been Publisher and COO of Marvel Comics for ten years this month, where he has grown it to dominate the comics publishing market, though many readers won't even recognise his name.

He runs Publishing and Animation, and sits on the creative committee for both Movies and TV, with input into video games. He's one of only four people at Marvel to do so. His decisions not only influence exactly what gets published, where and when, but also has input into the other media that affect what gets published. He's Marvel's renaissance man. While Marvel and DC vacillate in power in the marketplace, no one at DC has power and influence concentrated in one man, as Dan Buckley. He also gains serious kudos for keeping everything running, and often publishing comics on two twigs and a piece of string after one of Perlmutter's economy drives, keeping the Marvel bullpen working, and working with Disney.

His rise to the top spot of this chart is as a result of his influence across the company as a whole consolidating and Marvel Publishing asserting more of an influence on the films than before. *Guardians Of The Galaxy* was pushed by the East Coast, not the West. There's more to come and it directly impacts on the publishing. Think all the Inhumans projects coming up are just about the comics? No.

Next year's position depends upon: Sorting out continuing poor performance in the bookstore market.

02 **ROBERT KIRKMAN** The modern-day king of comic book creators. Robert Kirkman is the first and only non-founder partner on the board at Image Comics, has the *Walking Dead* TV show in his pocket, potential *Thief Of Thieves* and *Clone* TV shows on the way, and the *Walking Dead* volumes that own the bookstore charts month in, month out, and have all but single handedly saved Diamond Book Distributors, making up half the books they sell.

Add to that his Skybound production company publishing his new writer-owned comics, comics by other talent that he editorially produces and keeps a stake in, and the desire to create and push new kinds of comics and formats. Robert Kirkman has marked himself out as one of today's principal players, freed of certain market demands and able to do, well, pretty much as he pleases. And he does.

He's the only American creator whose new work is being published in France and the USA simultaneously. You should see how well *The Walking Dead* sells in France – aside from *The Simpsons*, it's basically the only US comic that sells anything worth a damn. A trick that he's repeating across the world. He's also slowly becoming a comic creator that non-comic book readers have heard of, thanks to shows like *The Talking Dead*.

Next year's position depends upon: *Walking Dead* moving into the top ten on a regular basis.

03 **DAN DIDIO** The public face of DC Comics, Dan DiDio entered as a

Warner Bros executive co-writing *Superboy* with Jimmy Palmiotti. He quickly became an executive at DC with Warners' full backing. Working under Paul Levitz, he was very much a new broom – and it's one that ended up sweeping Levitz out of the door. The revamp of the DC Comics structure, creating DC Entertainment, also saw DiDio promoted to the position of Co-Publisher and allowed him to do the one thing he'd been pushing for years, a complete revamp of the DC Universe from the bottom up. It was a dazzling success and is credited with both saving the publisher and lifting the entire market, and he has been very involved with the micro managing of titles to keep all the plates spinning since.

There have been many conflicts with comic creators, leading to repeated walkouts and shouting matches, but it's hard to argue with his transformation of the publisher's performance. His twisting and turning as an executive, combines with his showman appeal, taking the stand at conventions and inviting questions from all. Following the example of Joe Quesada, he's become a strong face of the company to the fans, and the DC Nation TV show and editorial branding continues to exacerbate that. He may be knocked down by Diane Nelson from time to time, but he's in comics for the long term.

Next year's position depends upon: Working out what follows follows *Sandman Overture*...

04 **JOE QUESADA** As a jobbing artist he worked on Valiant titles such

as *Ninjak* and *Solar*, before he started doing more work for the Big Two. And that could have been his career, forever if he hadn't formed his own company with inker Jimmy Palmiotti, Event Comics, and started publishing their own work. Event was then hired by Marvel to revamp some of their edgier comics that had lost their way.

So when the company reorganised itself following bankruptcy, Bob Harras was ditched and Joe Quesada promoted to his position of Editor-In-Chief, where he stayed longer than anyone since Stan Lee. He brought many big names to the publisher and pulled Marvel back up by its bootstraps, probably the man most responsible for that success. Promoted inside the company across different media, he's recently returned to be more hands on with its comic book editorial decision making process. Much of *Avengers Vs X-Men* had his handiwork over it, as well as the Marvel NOW semi-relaunch which managed to copy DC's revamp, but maintain more of the successes across the line.

Next year's position depends upon: Whether Marvel NOW TWO can repeat Marvel NOW's success.

05 ERIC STEPHENSON Rising through the ranks as editorial assistant, writer and editor, via Rob Liefeld's Extreme Comics, Eric Stephenson was made publisher of Image Comics. Always a relatively powerful position, Stephenson managed to take it to new heights as the most powerful cool-hunter in the comic book industry. He has a track record in picking the right comic by the right creator at the right time and seeing them blossom as a result. And managed to pull mainstream comic creators from their Marvel and DC teat and offer them the ability to create great new comics to work on, and profit from their success. He has repeatedly taken people with no previous published comics, put their work at the front of the Diamond Previews catalogue, committed to them from one series to the next, and kickstarted their careers into comic book superstardom from nothing. His power comes completely from his position, but it's one he has used to better the industry and garner great loyalty as a result. This last year has seen *East Of West, Sheltered, Ghosted, Satellite Sam* and more blossom in a way they never could have before.

Next year's position depends upon: Not pissing off Robert Kirkman.

06 KEVIN FEIGE Marvel Studios big go-to-guy for all their movies. Beginning as an Associate Producer for the first *X-Men* film, his credits have built with each movie until Kevin Feige became President of Production at Marvel Studios. The man behind the creation of the Marvel Movie Universe, he is credited with finding the easiest path from comics to screen for a ton of Marvel comic book characters. And in doing so, giving their films something very new and previously unseen at this level, a cross franchise cinematic continuity, which makes even the worst of his films a must-see for so many fans, looking for the next chapter to obsess about. Which also lets him take more risks, with casting, with directing, with even the characters they choose. Their 2010 plans for *Guardians Of The Galaxy* are coming to the fore in 2015, and *The Inhumans* looks next.

His whims have a tendency to find themselves reflected in the next Marvel year-long crossover. And he's one of the most influential voices in the decision making process, with a full plate ahead of him for the next decade at least.

Next year's position depends upon: *Guardians* not flopping.

07 AXEL ALONSO

As well as Joe, much of the success of Marvel NOW was down to this man, shaking up the creative teams and assigning them to new and exciting books or arcs. Marvel hasn't felt this fresh since the early days of Quesada and Jemas.

Not as confident as Joe Quesada, publicly at least, he has the respect of his creators in a way that Dan DiDio can only dream of. And he has been instrumental in bringing in the kind of talent that did well on creator owned books at other companies, and pinning the future of the comic book publisher on them.

From Matt Fraction to Jonathan Hickman to Nick Spencer to Kelly Sue DeConnick to Jason Aaron to Charles Soule to Matt Kindt to Robert Venditti, Alonso has sought out and championed the people who now write some the best-selling superhero comics in the industry while still supporting their work on the books that brought them to his attention in the first place.

Eric Stephenson at Image Comics sets them up, Axel Alonso reels them in. And then Eric takes them back again.

Next year's position depends upon: Doing some spots on QVC.

08 SCOTT SNYDER

DC's most consistently bankable comics creator has rocketed up the chart this year. Yet he's still a relative newcomer to the comics industry, coming in off the career as a semi-successful novelist.

Much of this is down to the New 52 giving him a couple of books that really showed his abilities off, *Batman* and *Swamp Thing*. Not only did he do well with Greg Capullo on *Batman*, but he saw it beating the expected Geoff Johns and Jim Lee *Justice League* book a number of times in the charts, and it's now established as the most bankable DC book on the stands again.

Combined with another top selling book, *Superman Unchained*, with Jim Lee choosing Snyder to work with, as well as the bestselling Vertigo title for an age, *The Wake* (until *Overture* comes along, of course) and creating a semi-franchise in *American Vampire*, Marvel are already making plans to try and recruit the writer back to them, and DC are prepared to do anything to keep their golden boy onside. However the word is that Snyder may declare a plague on both their houses and follow the Mark Millar route to a line of creator owned titles in the near future.

Next year's position depends upon: Keeping everything feeling fresh.

09 **JONATHAN HICKMAN** is notable as one of the few comics creators at Image whose submission was simply picked out of the pile and commissioned. *Nightly News* remains one of the most interesting comic books published of late in terms of telling a story more through design than pen and ink art skills. It's a reputation that has seen similar innovations applied to his more mainstream work such as *Infinity* and *The Avengers.*

Rapidly rising, Hickman has done what no other Marvel creator has done, run a major company crossover project, *Infinity*, while simultaneously publishing a line of his own creator owned work, with *East Of West* joining *The Manhattan Projects* on the stands – and selling like *Saga* and *The Walking Dead* - without missing a beat, as well as launching *God Is Dead* for Avatar.

Creating some amazing, nay revolutionary, comic books for Image (and still is), Hickman was picked by Marvel and given the keys to the *Fantastic Four*. Making it a popular comic again, he was named one of the Marvel Architects and now has *Avengers* to work with. But also he is key in guiding new creative talent into publication.

Next year's position depends upon: Keeping all his plates spinning, then doing the loop-the-loop.

10 **DAVID STEINBERGER** CEO of ComiXology, the leading digital comics distribution service working with Marvel, DC, Image, IDW, hell, pretty much everybody. His role is partly a facilitator of his clients' wishes, but where ComiXology goes, the industry is now following. Even those who don't sign up to ComiXology are in the business of comparing their business to his. The individual website presence for existing comic book stores have also given ComiXology a new bricks and mortar power base as well, shifting the distribution away from Diamond Comic Distributors, even on their home ground. And as more and more comics go day-and-date digital, and more and more people buy electronic readers, so more and more of the market comes under his domain. A relatively benign dictator so far, nevertheless his power to affect the spread of comics content is massive and verging on the monopolistic. The future industry battles over content, sales, royalties, and whether of not a comic creator even needs a publisher, will be in his hands. It's a good thing he's such a nice guy. For now.

Next year's position depends upon: The continuing rise of digital comic publishing, and ComiXology keeping up.

11 GEOFF JOHNS Interning with Richard Donner, producer of the *Superman* films, was possibly the biggest break the young Geoff Johns could have hoped for, then rapidly becoming a production assistant. A tour around DC Comics from Eddie Berganza came with an opportunity to pitch a *Stars And S.T.R.I.P.E.* comic. Johns was in.

He brought back Hal Jordan as Green Lantern, and helped spin off a series of events titles and was made Chief Creative Officer, for DC Entertainment and was the key creative figure for the New 52 relaunch. He also heads up his own creative hit squad on the West Coast, is involved with all DC Nation, TV, movies and games, and even managed to spin the failure of the *Green Lantern* movie to his favour within the company. Like Jim Lee, while he has superiors above him, few of them could guarantee a best-selling comic like Johns. Plus he co-owns a comic shop. That's got to come in handy.

However his slide from last year is down to his decision to step down from some of his comics concerns and moving onto television shows such as *Archer*.

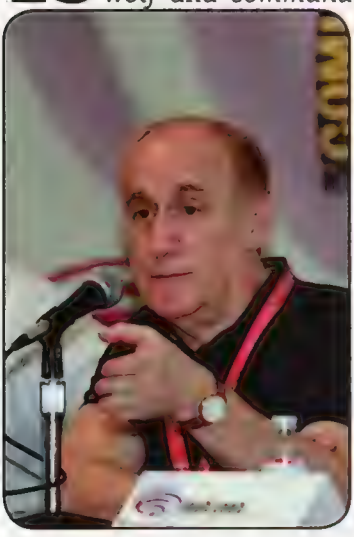
Next year's position depends upon: The success of *Forever Evil* and if it will transform the company as *Blackest Night* did.

12 ISAAC PERLMUTTER The principal figure behind Marvel Studios deciding to make their own movies rather than just farm out the licenses, it was his decision that would allow Disney to buy Marvel. Netting himself over a over a billion dollars in the deal, this made him instantly the richest man working in comics. As Disney's largest single shareholder, he's moved some of his focus off Marvel comics and onto Lucasfilm, but he still maintains strong links and oversight over the comics business, through those he delegates to.

It's worth remembering that Isaac Perlmutter fought in the Six Day War. And has been fighting his whole life. Famous for running Marvel as if it were a penny pinching start up, he monitors pen use, the amount of kettles in the kitchen, and fires anyone he suspects of not bringing in instantaneous revenue. And now he's getting the opportunity to do that all around Disney as well. His financial whims have direct and lasting impact and influence on the comics that Marvel produce, and who produces them, though he hasn't fired too many people. Oh and he's packing at all times.

Next year's position depends upon: On whether any of those nasty lawsuits at Disney catch up to him.

13 JEPH LOEB Writer of movies *Teen Wolf* and *Commando*, Jeph Loeb is



a TV and film producer who really wanted to work in comic books. So he did.

Known in comics best for his critically acclaimed early comic work such as *Batman: The Long Halloween* and *Daredevil: Yellow* – and critically derided later work such as *Hulk* and *Ultimates 3* – he became a producer and writer on both the *Smallville* and *Heroes* TV shows, showing a great degree of speciality in superheroes on the small screen. He was subsequently head-hunted by the publisher of many of his comics, Marvel, to head up their growing TV production company, with a view to developing live action shows to accompany the successful animation series.

Their first making its was to the screen, *Agents Of SHIELD*, is very much down to Loeb and his influence, and the fruits can be seen all across Marvel's publishing line as a result. It is possible that this success may finally be what Marvel's book line needs to push it more comprehensively into America's bookstores in the way that DC and Image take for granted now.

Next year's position depends upon: *Hulk* TV.

14 JIM LEE He still holds the record for the best-selling single monthly

comic book in the world with the relaunched *X-Men #1*.

But soon after, he left to start his own publisher with a group of fellow artists, Image Comics. He created a fully-fledged studio, Wildstorm, with a wealth of titles from *WildCATS* to *Stormwatch* to *The Authority*, and specialising in licensing. DC Comics then bought Wildstorm for a very healthy sum and an executive position for Jim Lee.

Now he's co-publisher of DC Comics, the designer of the DC Universe Online and the relaunched DC Universe. He launched *Superman Unchained* with Scott Snyder to the top of the charts, though subsequent issues have seen it slip.

He has a massive corporate machine behind him, that need him more than he needs them. And he's staying in comics. However, he has slipped from the top spot over a reluctance to use the power that comes with the position. As creators discovered when he asked them what he was meant to do, after complaints about the existence of *Before Watchmen*.

Next year's position depends upon: Seizing back a little more control.

15 MIKE RICHARDSON The tallest man in comics, especially on a windy day when his shock of white hair flies up, Mike Richardson is the original independent multi-media success story in comics.

In the last thirty years as publisher of Dark Horse Comics, he's had more comics turned into films than any other. From *The Mask* to *Hellboy* to *Sin City* to *300* to.. um, *Timecop*. He's championed that rare creature in comics, the commercial auteur, in Mike Mignola, Sergio Aragones, Stan Sakai, Frank Miller, and more. He's turned the comics license into a commercial backbone that many try to copy with *Buffy*, *Star Wars,* and *Conan*, while still innovating new work and making discoveries such as Matt Kindt. And then warping the market with his *Zelda Hyrule Historia* book...

Oh yes, and he owns Dark Horse outright. The biggest comic book publisher in America still owned by one man. They are also pursuing their own separate digital comics strategy rather than giving away share to a third party, so he stays in control of that side as well. And he insists on decent personal producer fees on all those movies, so it's not like he'll be in the poor house soon either. Richardson also owns the comic store and website Things From Another World, which has a sizeable online presence.

Next year's position depends upon: Deciding whether or not to sell up and buy a small island.

16 DAVID BOGART Senior Vice President of Operations & Procurement, Publishing at Marvel Comics, David Bogart is key to how the publisher operates, and the work that gets produced.

He was head hunted over a decade ago when he was Editor-In-Chief of Harris Comics, and responsible for publishing the likes of Mark Millar, Garth Ennis, Warren Ellis, Grant Morrison, Amanda Conner, Jimmy Palmiotti, and Alan Moore on Vampirella, a remarkable effort from such a small publisher.

At Marvel, he moved from VP Business Affairs, to manage Talent Relations and then two years ago to his current position, where he interprets the will of Isaac Perlmutter. He's a bit like the Metatron in that respect. One of the few people at Marvel with influence and input across many disciplines.

And once upon a time, he also head-hunted me to write about comics for money in the first place for the departed website Next Planet Over at the end of the nineties. I got a taste for it. I am, quite literally, his fault.

Next year's position depends upon: Me understanding more about what he does.

17 MARK MILLAR One of the greatest rises in the comics industry is that of Mark Millar, lifting himself up from the position of junior co-writer for Grant Morrison to one of the biggest comics media players going. With his Millarworld line of creator owned comics published by Marvel and Image, he has a strong history of turning them into films, games, entire lines of merchandise, especially with *Wanted* and *Kick Ass*, and becoming a kind of comics ambassador to Fox over their Marvel movies.

His generosity with artists has also seen them clamour to work with him and gain success and co-ownership in the process, something denied them with other writers. However, the disappearance of his convention, his magazine, and his low budget directorial film show that not all he touches glitters.

The most Machiavellian comics creator, there seems little to stop him. He remains friends with the great and good in Hollywood. Also his political links in supporting the current the Scottish government saw Millar thanked by the First Minister in his electoral victory speech and it's widely believed the socialist Millar may have political office in his future. If he can spare the time from writing funnybooks, that is.

Next year's position depends upon: *The Supercrooks* film doing better than *Kick Ass 2* and *Jupiter's Children* actually coming out.

18 DAVID GABRIEL Senior Vice President of Sales at Marvel, David Gabriel is the symmetrical equivalent to Bob Wayne at DC Comics. And like Wayne, Gabriel has a little bit of snark on him, on hand to encourage retailers to rip their cover of DC books, or point out that any DC policy change, Marvel did first. And then claiming a death every quarter to bump up sales. Except he does it with a spring in his step.

Famously, he's also responsible for reintroducing vampires back to Marvel for a new monthly X-Men book, which didn't exactly set the world on fire as the X-Men Vs Twilight explosion he was hoping for. Hasn't stopped him for pushing his creative influence however. In charge of sales and with editorial input... a dangerous combination, that gives him a leap up on others.

But it was his decision to push incentive orders for retailers at Marvel, that has seen stores stuffed to the gills with Marvel comics of late. And he's always looking to the next thing.

Next year's position depends upon: Forgetting about the vampires.

19 JOHN ROBERTS John Roberts is the co-founder of comiXology and a pioneer in digital comics. Back in the early noughties, he launched Marvel's original dotComics line under Bill Jemas as well as developing the "motion-comic" for the publisher. He was very much ahead of his time.

After working with a number of blue chip entertainment firms, he set up ComiXology, now the leading distributor of digital comics, with David Steinberger. And this year, he has stepped up his prominence by innovating within the company. From ComiXology Submit to going multilingual, he's looking at the future of the digital comic, while preserving the value of the DRM that keeps the whole thing spinning.

With increasing sales through the movement of the market, it would be easy for the likes of Roberts to be complacent. It is his understanding of business and the market that ensures that he is not.

Next year's position depends upon: The value of DRM at ComiXology in the face of Image going DRM-free.

20 BOB HARRAS Few people saw this coming, but the revival of Bob Harras' fortunes has been spectacular.

Editor-in-chief of Marvel at a time of great upheaval, after the bankruptcy he was summarily fired and replaced by Joe Quesada. Little was heard of him for some time, until he emerged at Jim Lee's Wildstorm Studios in a relatively minor role. When DC bought Wildstorm, Bob Harras came along for the ride and began working in the DC archive, biding his time. So when DC reformed and Jim Lee became co-publisher, he appointed Bob Harras as Editor-In-Chief. Seen as a rather boring safe pair of hands at the time, Harras has become far more hands on than the puppet figure some were expecting. He also took direct control over DC Vertigo, something denied previous DC editor-in-chiefs, and brought in a bunch of his old colleagues, from Scott Lobdell to Bobbie Chase to Howard Mackie to Tom DeFalco, but is now exploring indie creators too. He has used his Marvel crossover skills to keep the storylines of the DC Universe relatively coherent, on time, and on schedule.

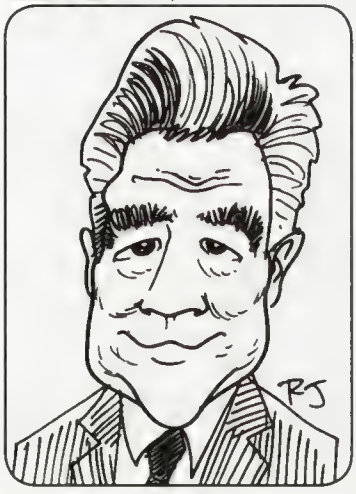
Next year's position depends upon: The continued success of the relaunch.

21 **DIANE NELSON** Nelson's appointment as President of the newly rebranded DC Entertainment has pulled the brand kicking and screaming into the media spotlight, to inspire films, TV shows, and the full commercial exploitation once resisted. This new reality formed the basis of the New 52, the new control over creators, and the kind of books and stories that DC can publish. And she's the one who pushed for the Watchmen prequels more than anyone. Her power base in Warners has, however, been diluted and she hasn't even been able to hold DiDio to his commitments.

22 **TOM BREVOORT** Considered the oldest of the old guard of Marvel Comics, Brevoort's elevation to Executive Editor and Senior Vice President of Publishing sticks in the craw of those who hope he'll revert to the "old way of doing things." It's not going to happen. Second to Axel Alonso, editing the Avengers line and more, has a slightly lower public profile at conventions but makes up for it with a vast comic book knowledge, a sense of self deprecation, and a dedication to delivering Formspring answers in an engaging fashion to the fans.

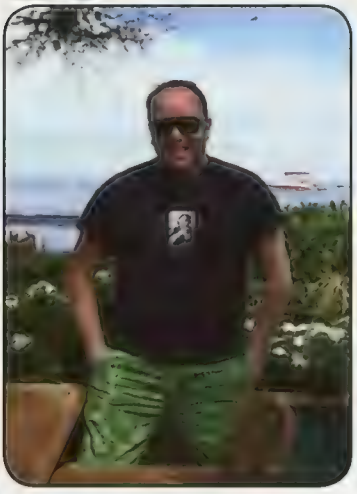
23 **BRIAN K VAUGHAN** Comics and TV writer, Vaughan has worked on DC and Marvel properties, but it is his own works for which he is most lauded, *Y The Last Man*, *Ex Machina*, *Pride of Baghdad*, and *Saga*, Image's biggest debut for many years. Incredibly picky on what he works on, he can add sales and gravitas to a new comic book work like few around him. He commands respect in comics, and in television as well.

24 **KEVIN TSUJIHARA** Once upon a time, he was the man who conspired with then-publisher Paul Levitz to hide DC Comics within Warner Bros' byzantine levels of accountability, he has now risen to CEO of the company. And unlike previous occupants of the position, he actually has an interest in the comics publishing side of DC Comics as well as its potential film and licensing deals. Many of us are very interested in exactly what he's going to do with it now.



25 BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS The man who revamped Spider-Man as Ultimate Spider-Man was a very strong voice at Marvel comics through the noughties, even though his creator owned comics waned. Last year's *Avengers Vs X-Men* event seemed to act as a swansong of sorts, but refocused him onto the X-Men books, some of the best selling in the industry, and the current *Battle Of The Atom* event. His prominence in comics has reduced, however as his life focus seems to have changed. But that strong voice in Marvel films, games, and TV shows remains.

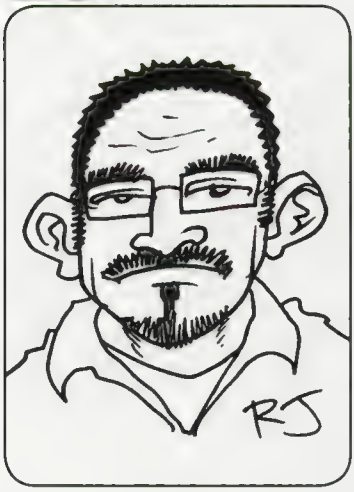
26 JONAH WEILAND Heading the successful Comic Book Resources, Jonah also runs the servers that host other comics sites. Running a mix of genial commentary, interviews, and reviews, CBR has become the site the comics publishers love to deal with, knowing they will not be bitten on the bottom. He owns the whole thing lock stock and barrel and he's got a boat at San Diego Comic Con. He no longer goes to the show, but the show comes to him.



27 TED ADAMS The powerhouse behind IDW, publishing a heady mix of franchise licenses, book adaptations, and comics with a potential for mass-media exploitation, such as *30 Days Of Night* and *Locke & Key*, taking a lead on digital apps. IDW has now grown with hits such as *My Little Pony*, *X-Files*, and more, and with *Transformers* and *GI Joe* having become Hasbro's publisher of choice, as well as innovating with high end Artists Edition projects.

28 THE UNKNOWN AMAZON ALGORITHM WRITER With so many sales going through Amazon right now, the power of this individual or team in highlighting one comic over another, or working out which titles to show a potential reader that they "Might Also Like." With Kindle sales growing as well, the whims of this decision process can make or break a title. Amazon also has a habit of letting the public know a publisher's plans further in advance than a publisher may prefer.

29 EDDIE BERGANZA Now that his ban from attending conventions for DC Comics (after certain personal issues came to light) has been lifted, Eddie Berganza is becoming more and more of a face for the publisher. Group Editor on the Superman books, his relationship with Editor-In-Chief Bob Harras has been described as very friendly and tight by co-workers, creating a Brainiac/Luther team between them, and partly responsible for his return to prominence at the publisher.



30 PETER PHILIPS Senior Vice President & General Manager, Digital Media Group at Marvel Comics, Philips is the man behind Marvel's current digital comics success and innovation, pushing the likes of Marvel AR and the digital download program, which gives added value to the print titles, expanding the Marvel Unlimited program for collectors with MU Plus, the Infinity comics and such promotions as the SXSW 700 First Issue downloads. He is one of the people making noise in digital.

31 JOSS WHEDON Writer and director of *The Avengers*, the most comics-affecting Marvel movie to date. Just one glimpse of Thanos, and you can't move for comics starring the purple tyrant. Now working exclusively for Marvel Studies on future films and television for the company, it's a boom for anyone who wanted people to take superhero comics and films seriously. And now *Agent Of SHIELD* His Buffy licensed comics for Dark Horse have slipped in sales and prominence however.

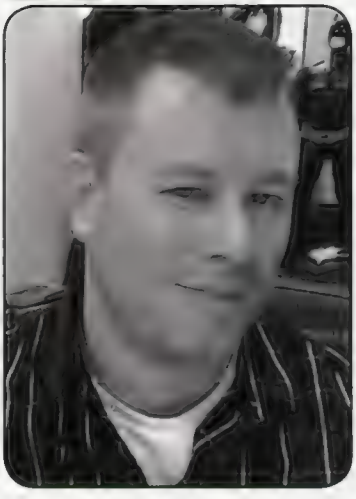
32 GRANT MORRISON Reinventor of *X-Men*, *Justice League*, and *Batman*, he was given editorial freedom in the New 52, writing *Action Comics*, afforded to few other creators. Now reinventing *Wonder Woman* and about to launch *Multiversity* for DC, his fanbase approaches cult status and even a comment on a Batman comic from thirty years ago makes the headlines. The first rock god of comic books. And they're even letting him finish the poor selling *Seaguy*. Now that's power.

33 NEIL GAIMAN Co-creator of Sandman and the man most responsible for the literary and monetary success of DC's Vertigo comics, his return to comics after time spent away as a novelist, TV writer, commentator, and wife of Amanda Palmer, is much celebrated. He has created a fanbase built from all sorts of fan groups who claim him as their own. His new *Sandman* series is likely to dominate the industry on its publication in the way that *Before Watchmen* simply didn't. And his work for the CBDLF has pushed those calls for free speech in comics into new, and ideologically strident paths.

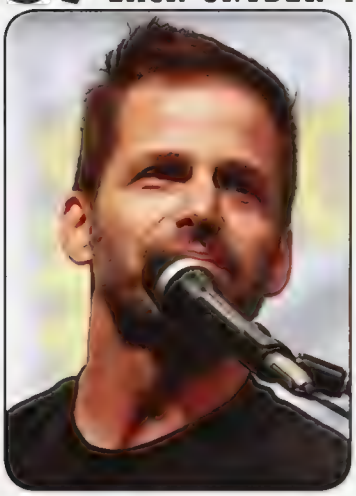
34 BOB WAYNE A man who managed to get two of his bosses fired before taking their jobs, Bob Wayne is the true survivor and prosperor in comics. Senior VP Sales at DC, he remains a retailer at heart and knows more about the direct comics market than most anyone, maintaining its trust and setting its print runs – including those 3D covers. Oops. One of the more Machiavellian operators in the industry, he will one day retire to Texas and write his tell-all book. Everyone will read it.

35 ROSS RICHIE Publisher of Boom! Studios. Boom! Continues to publish a mixture of originated work, licensed work, and celebrity name titles, all with an eye to future media exploitation. Losing the Disney licence reduced its reach, but gaining *Adventure Time* and *Regular Show* more than made up for the mouse. Richie continues to keep things together however, and has become a stalwart on the comics scene.

36 MIKE MARTS Editor of the Batman line at DC Comics, Mike Marts is responsible for DC's jewels and has managed to attract all sorts of unlikely people to join the team. Scott Snyder, Greg Capullo, David Finch, Gail Simone, Grant Morrison, Frank Quitely, Chris Burnham, John Layman, not the people most likely to work on the monthly Batbooks... until they were hired. And now this eclectic bunch seem very natural indeed. And dominating DC's monthly charts.



37 CHRISTOPHER NOLAN and ZACK SNYDER This now-two-headed beast has given DC Comics *Batman* and *Superman* films they can be proud of and more besides. Classically, as influental on the comics as much as Marvel's titles, this has been changing slightly. With *Batman/Superman* and *Justice League* to follow, their influence on the *Arrow* show as well, and the way that all feeds back into the comics now,



38 GREG CAPULLO Artist on the Batman book, there was quite a bidding war between Marvel and DC over his departure from Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* and *Haunt* books. He could have chosen Wolverine, but DC's ability to attract him and pair him with Scott Snyder has led to a book that, month after month, dominates the comic store and book store, and gives Greg Capullo the room to experiment. His double act with Snyder at conventions has to be seen to be believed.

39 MATT FRACTION Heading up *Fantastic Four* and the new *Inhumanity* event, Fraction remains a major wunderkind for Marvel. Recruited from the independent press where he made a big name for himself and his comics, he continues to give indie cred to the corporate work he produces, while his breakout book for Marvel, *Hawkeye*, dominates their bookstore sales in a most surprising way. Married to fellow Marvel and Image Comics writer, Kelly Sue DeConnick, he has become another mentor at Marvel for new and upcoming talent.

40 JOHN ROOD The Executive VP of Sales at DC Comics is a Warners plant. But with a tattoo of the state of Texas on his ankle, and a penchant for ending up on viral sports videos, John has pretty much the ear of the industry, is considered a fun guy to hang out with but also a very serious man when it comes to business. His whim can twist and turn DC Comics and the industry. You know Alec Baldwin in *30 Rock*? He's basically that, just slightly thinner.

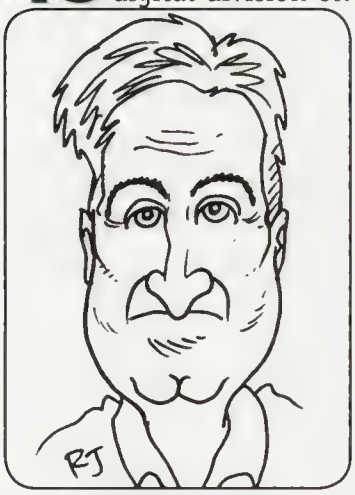
41 DINESH SHAMDASANI CCO and Founder of Valiant Entertainment, who has made a splash with incredibly high sales for a line of comics that many had simply given up on. But hiring a fast, lean and efficient team has seen the new upstart outdo its rivals repeatedly. Even when DC deliberately tries to take their creators for their own lineup, Valiant continues to bring them back. And his film history has kept titles like *Bloodshot* in the eye of Hollywood. Success in that field may see his influence rise.

42 NICK LANDAU Owner of the Forbidden Planet chain and the publishers Titan Books and Titan Magazines would make Nick Landau powerful enough, but it's his work with Mark Millar that has seen him gain even greater prominence of late. Investing in Mark Millar's Kapow convention and *CLiNT Magazine* may not have paid off in the long run but *Kick Ass* certainly did. And the new lineup of creator owned comics as Titan Comics is turning heads.

43 STEVE GEPPI Nicknamed the Postmaster General, Steve Geppi owns outright Diamond Comic Distributors which has a monopoly on distributing the biggest comics publishers to comic stores in the US, Canada. and the UK. Now out of debt, while he does not concern himself with the day to day running of the company, his whims can still have a major effect on the comics you are able to buy – and where you can buy them.

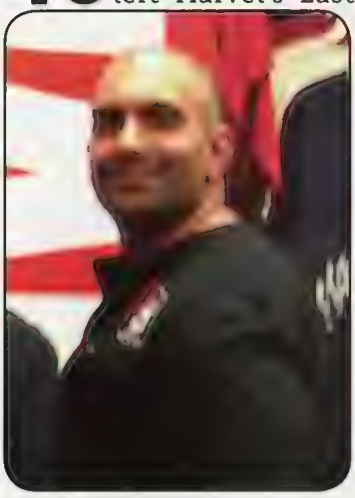
44 MIDTOWN COLLECTIVE So hard to split Gahl, Gerry, Thor, and the gang, but Midtown Comics has rapidly become the most media friendly comic store in the USA. Based in New York, in close proximity to the main publishers, their attention to publicity has ensured that it's where the comic industry shops more than any other store - and reaction from Midtown staffers and owners makes it back to the publishers more than any other as well. Running Marvel's subscription service also can't hurt.

45 JIM CHADWICK Editor of DC's digital division on the west coast,



Chadwick has been responsible for hiring some of the best and brightest (and Oscar Scott Card) on the digital anthology titles and seeing books such as *Injustice Gods Among Us* dominate digital sales across the comics industry, by perfecting the way comics and games can tie in together for increased sales success of both. Expect *Arkham City* to do similar.

46 ARUNE SINGH He may have left Marvel's East Coast for the



West as a new Executive on their TV side, but I am very aware of his input on Marvel's publishing efforts and how he is increasingly becoming a face of the publisher at comic conventions. Coming from CBR, his relationship with Jonah Weiland is still remarkably strong and helps maintain the link between the two. Also, he's one of the few people who can persuade me to hold a story...

47 JOE MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI The creator of *Babylon 5* is a long term

comics fan who turned his TV media profile into a comics career. He'd written a few comics before, but his success saw him head-hunted by Marvel to relaunch *Amazing Spider-Man* before writing *Thor*. Sales boomed on both, but he jumped ship for DC, launching the *Earth One* original graphic novel line, again bucking sales expectations. All the time while juggling his screenplays, including *Thor* and launching a new line of comics at Image.

48 ROGER FLETCHER VP Sales and Marketing of Diamond Comic

Distributors, Roger Fletcher is the man at the company behind Diamond's support and investment in Free Comic Book Day, as well as the Hallowe'en Comicfest giveaway promotions. A man credited with helping to successfully pulling Diamond out of the mire it had sunk into a couple of years ago, and helping to save the current direct market in the process. No biggie...

49 **BOBBIE CHASE** An ex-Marvel editor-in-chief, she went to ground after she was let go, to work on Pony magazines. That was until a fellow ex-Marvel editor-in-chief Bob Harras recruited her at DC to be his second, and she now has the role of Editorial Director, one she uses in quite a hands on fashion. She brings with her a devotion from a number of creators both at Marvel and now DC and a fierce dedication to the industry. And a bit of a temper to match.

50 **MARC SILVESTRI** took his success drawing *X-Men* and *Wolverine* for Marvel to form Image Comics, famous for the likes of *Cyberforce*, *Witchblade*, and *Darkness*. As CEO of Top Cow, he is the publisher within a publisher at Image Comics, specialising in female action titles and licensed work, he still draws comics for Marvel and is now finding new ways to innovate to publish comics with social funding.

51 **HANK KANALZ** Original writer for *Youngblood*, Hank Kanalz worked for Wildstorm until the DC buy-out. Working his way over to running Warner's theme park, he returned to DC Comics, running the digital side and taking a position as the Senior Vice President of Vertigo and Integrated Publishing. He is behind and involved in many of DC's digital moves and innovations and beginning to be a face for them as well.

52 **ERIK LARSEN** Founder of Image Comics, he's the only one of the originals who has stayed writing and drawing their original comic title at the publisher, in Larsen's case *Savage Dragon*. Ex-publisher of the company, he gets very involved in the Image's day-to-day workings, as well as encouraging and helping new talent come in to Image Comics – and the industry as a whole. And he also co-owns a comic store, which has got to be handy when finding back issues of his own work.

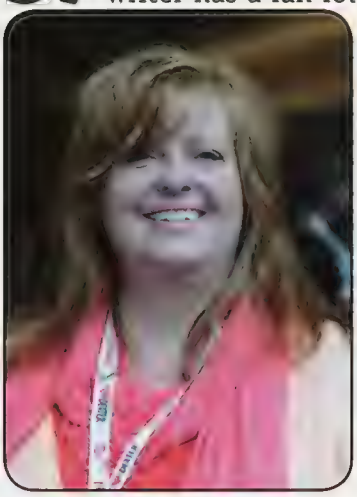
53 RYAN PENAGOS Executive Editorial Director of Marvel Comics' Digital Media Group, as well as getting his overseeing done on Marvel's digital offerings, he also plays the public facing role of Agent M, keeping readers up on the social networking nature of Marvel, live blogging from comics conventions, and from the publisher as a whole. He tweets, the world listens.

54 STAN LEE Possibly the best known person working in comic books, Stan Lee reached his creative height in the sixties at Marvel, now he mostly uses his brand to add credence and publicity to all manner of projects from other publishers. As a result, even in his nineties, he finds himself one of the busiest men in comics and his San Diego Comic Con schedule would make a younger man wither.

55 MIKE MIGNOLA Creator of Hellboy, Mike Mignola has developed this character into a line of comics, toys, games, and films, outshining many of his contemporaries. A fanbase are guaranteed to follow him wherever he goes, from comics like *BPRD* to animation like *Atlantis* and *The Amazing Screw-On Head* and movies like *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. *Hellboy* is a keen performer in bookstores and Mignola has very much taken over Frank Miller's role as Dark Horse's most prominent media friendly name.

56 CHRIS POWELL Retailer of Lone Star Comics, turned VP Retailer Services at Diamond Comic Distributors, Powell has spearheaded a number of initiatives in the comics industry, encouraging and incentivising retailers to launch new stores or expand, by persuading publishers to offer very attractive terms. He has pushed increased technology into stores allowing them to monitor stock and increase it where needed. And continues to innovate in the print industry

57 **GAIL SIMONE** This comic book writer has a fan following that can not be ignored. After she was fired from her remaining DC book *Batgirl*, she was then rehired days later after an online campaign shamed DC over the decision. She was also given a new title as well. Simone achieved the seeming impossible and set a precedent for other creators at DC to threaten the same. Could DC dare fire her now? She also turned her fanbase into a generator for a six figure Kickstarter, one of the highest.



58 **SEIJI HORIBUCHI** Chairman of Viz Media, the largest publishers of manga in the US. Initially as an importer and exporter between America and Japan, Seiji Horibuchi found comic stores resistant to manga. Convinced there was a market, he repackaged Japanese work as graphic novels and went for the bookstores instead. It found an audience brought up on anime on television, creating a brand new American audience for comics, that the comic store didn't cater for, and they still dominate the bookstore market as a result.

59 **WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN** Publisher of Avatar Comics, the only one able to put out the work of Alan Moore, Warren Ellis, Jonathan Hickman, and Garth Ennis at the same time. By giving writers creative freedom, ownership, and advance payment, before combining them with a series of South American and European artists, he's grown his company into a patron of the arts. He's looked to Si Spurrier, Kieron Gillen, and Justin Jordan for the future. He also owns Bleeding Cool, and publishes *Bleeding Cool magazine.*

60 **LANCE FESTERMAN** The man at show organiser Reed Expo who started the New York Comic Con, Lance Festerman now oversees an entire sector, including both NYCC and C2E2, the two comic conventions that most challenge San Diego Comic Con for media and public dominance. And it seems expansion is on his mind, not only in the USA but overseas. If you notice Bleeding Cool has a stronger presence at NYCC this year, that's down to Lance.

61 JONATHAN GOLDWATER The man who took the fuddy duddy old fashioned Archie Comics of his father's company and turned it into a high media profile publisher who constantly hits the headlines with topical, socially relevant issues that transcend its origins, with some decent licenses to match. Never before has Archie Comics been on the tip of so many tongues, and taking advantage of some wonderful supermarket and toy store placement.

62 SCOTT ALLIE Senior Managing Editor at Dark Horse Comics, Scott Allie edits the blockbusters at Dark Horse – *Buffy, Hellboy, Conan,* and more but also writes some of them too, as well as *Star Wars* comics. Seen as second to Mike Richardson at the Portland publisher, with a direct line to Joss Whedon, Guillermo Del Toro, and more, he's also a strong friendly face for the company at shows. He even has a Mini-Me...

63 CB CEBULSKI Senior VP Talent Relations, CB travels the world, blogging as he goes, the international face of Marvel Comics. He glad hands foreign nationals while keeping an eye out for portfolios of comic creators feted in their own country but unknown in the English speaking world. And grabs them for Marvel, with considerable success to date. It's in his power to take an unknown artist and see them draw the company's most prestigious comics in weeks. Freely outspoken, he is being groomed for great things within Marvel.

64 JOE FIELD Owner of the award-winning Flying Colors store in Northern California, might make him a contender for this list, but two other aspects top that. Joe is president of ComicsPRO, the professional organisation for comic stores that works as an advocate for the industry and responsible for a number of measures that have benefited the direct market. And he is also the inventor of Free Comic Book Day.

65 CHRIS RYALL Editor in chief of IDW, Chris Ryall makes the very important day-to-day commissioning decisions, shaping the way the company looks on a daily basis. Quite a jump from managing Kevin Smith's Movie Poop Shoot website, he deals with precious egos from all sorts of studios, from the BBC to Paramount without breaking a sweat. In public, anyway. He also finds time to write and develop his own franchises in the process.

66 JAMES PARKER Buyer for the Hastings chain, which recently added comic shop selections to all of its stores, making it overnight the largest comics chain in the direct market. While each store may not buy in bulk, combined, they can buy an awful lot of comics, and commission plenty of variant covers in the process. If James is schmoozed the right way, you could find yourself adding several thousand copies to your print run.

67 LIAM SHARP British action adventure artist, with decades of work for Marvel and DC as well as pursuing his projects with his own motion comics publisher, Mam Tor, Liam Sharp is now the main creator face of new digital motion comics publisher Madefire innovating new ways to tell comic book stories with a list of A-name creators. And at San Diego they were all queuing up to meet him.

68 JAMES KILLEN The buyer at Barnes & Noble and the kind of guy who can, and has, stopped DC selling their top hundred graphic novels in his store. He picks and chooses graphic novels for the entire industry, promotes certain books ahead of others, in print and on the Nook. It is arguable that his role is replaceable, but his experience in the field and knowledge of the form makes him a strong asset to both B&N and the comics industry as a whole.

69 SCOTT DUNBIER Originator of the Absolute format, he was fired by DC/Wildstorm after controversy over the publication of *The Black Dossier*. Dunbier had to sit his contract out until he could be hired by IDW, where he took to using his intimate knowledge of comic book original art to create the Artists Edition format, reprinting original art at the same size and material, preserving the look of the art boards as much as possible. Starting to be copied by other publishers, Dunbier has continued to innovate within the project and found new ways to make millions from comics.

70 NICK LOWE Not the singer./songwriter but the Senior editor of the X-Men line, Nick Lowe. He began as an intern at Marvel but now runs the company's most consistently successful line of comics, taking over from Axel Alonso, and reinventing the line with the likes of Kieron Gillen, Brian Wood, and Rick Remender driving the franchise forward, with Brian Bendis at its head. Spikey hair and loud of mouth, he's become a firm favourite on Marvel's AR content.

71 MARK WAID Comic book editor-turned-writer-turned-digital comics innovator, long standing comics industry editor and writer Mark Waid's Thrillbent comics line is like watching a dinosaur taking its first few flaps. But it seems to be succeeding, and influencing the likes of Marvel and DC in what they produce. And he keeps working on his Marvel projects as well, with *Daredevil* in particular drawing the critics' praise.

72 AMANDA CONNER Picked out for *Before Watchmen*, where she delivered the most critically acclaimed book of that run, Amanda Conner is an A-List artist who gets around, from DC, to Image, to Marvel, to Dynamite, she's one of the few variant cover artists who shifts extra copies. Her long relationship and marriage to Jimmy Palmiotti, ex-creative partner of Joe Quesada and Dan DiDio, also helps her maintain strong connections across the industry, ensuring that no one can ignore her work.

73 NICK BARRUCCI Publisher of Dynamite Entertainment, built up from Dynamic Forces, he specialises in publishing media adaptations such as *Green Hornet* and *Robocop*, the covers of Alex Ross and John Cassaday, as well as heavily involved in registering intellectual property rights and trademarks in public domain properties, such as *Jungle Girl, Re-Animator,* and the characters in *Project: Superpowers*. Uniquely he's also a publisher that Marvel will work with, in order to get their hands on some sweet sweet Alex Ross cover art. Extending that may see him rise up the list.

74 JASON KINGSLEY Owner of software company Rebellion, Kingsley liked *2000AD* so much he bought it, along with the *Judge Dredd Magazine*, as well as all rights to the comic's library of work. They create the greatest amount of original comic book pages in the UK, hundreds of pages a month, with the largest bank of comic book creators, and for many, they are the be all and end all of the comic book industry. And for the American market, they are one of the world's best R&D departments.

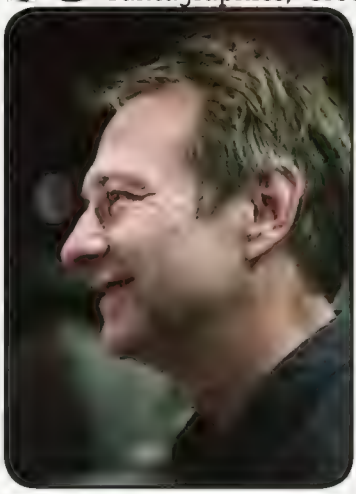
75 DAVID ALPERT and DAVID ENGEL Principals at production company Circle Of Confusion, Alpert and Engel are executive producers on *The Walking Dead* TV show for AMC, and also are heavily tied into a number of Robert Kirkman's comic book properties. Together, they are developing a number for TV and film, and their success will continue to reshape the comics market much as the success of *The Walking Dead* has done. Expect to see their position rise...

76 JOHN ROMITA JR Son of legendary Spider-Man artist John Romita Sr, Romita has made a long career at Marvel working on pretty every major character at the company. But it was his work with Mark Millar on *Kick Ass* that seemed to open his eyes to other possibilities. And right now he is in the centre of a tug of war between Marvel, DC's *Superman* and a string of creator owned books at Image. Watching Axel Alonso publicly suck up to him on stage at San Diego Comic Con was rather telling in retrospect.

77 STEVE WACKER The DC editor who put the weekly *52* comic book out on time, was then snatched by Marvel to do the same for their three-times-a-month *Amazing Spider-Man*. Since then he's truly embedded himself at Marvel and become a public face for the company. His willingness to talk to fans, defend the company's practices, and specifically the people working for Marvel as he takes on the trolls on message boards across the net has garnered him a following and loyalty denied most editors.

78 JIM VALENTINO *Shadowhawk* and *Normalman* may be less high profile now but his main claim to fame is finding cool comics and publishing them through Image Comics of which he is a founder. There's no quicker way to get to front of Previews prominence for a new comic creator than by impressing Valentino. Nick Spencer, Charles Soule, Jim Zub, they owe this man a lot. A veritable kingmaker of comics, he makes Eric Stephenson look good.

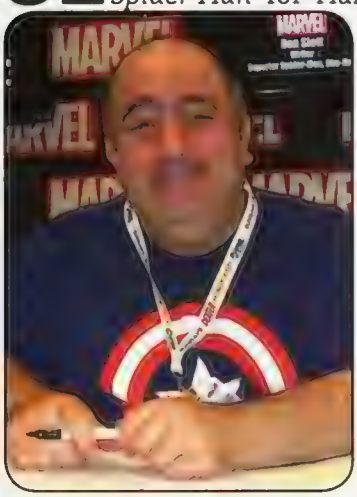
79 GARY GROTH Publisher of Fantagraphics, Groth rose through the fanzines to create a model publisher than many would emulate, publishing a range of creator owned eclectic material, and *The Comics Journal*, which held the comics industry's feet to the fire and refused the play the PR game. Now the company concentrates on translating foreign work and repackaging classic comics.



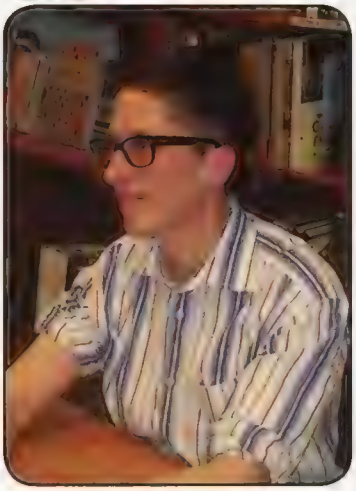
80 MATT SMITH Editor-In-Chief of *2000AD* and *Judge Dredd Megazine*, his hires of the last few years have heavily influenced the hiring patterns of Marvel, Image, and DC, with a number of comic creators going on to make their careers across the industry. Innovating with digital comics and storytelling techniques such as *Trifecta*, they truly deserved their first Eisner nomination this year.

81 **SHELLY BOND** Executive Editor of DC's Vertigo mature readers line, Bond has worked at DC Comics for twenty years, before Karen Berger stepped down. Already, Vertigo appears to be being remade in her image, with new projects commissioned and new marketing and promotional efforts taken advantage of. "Rave" is the word. Bond is also married to popular cartoonist Philip Bond.

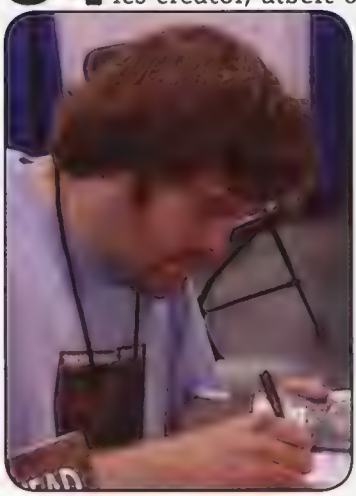
82 **DAN SLOTT** Writer of *Superior Spider-Man* for Marvel, he has repeatedly and continually brought a fresh approach to the character, and one that issue after issue is putting on readers and grabbing retailer reorders, against the usual trend of the market, without relying on crossovers, events or variant covers to do so. And over the past few years has reinvented himself remarkably from one regarded as a D-list writer into the top of the A-list.



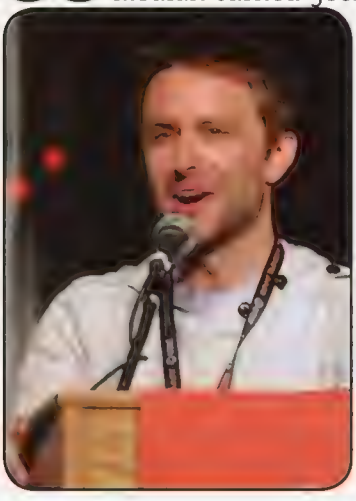
83 **ALISON BECHDEL** Creator of *Dykes To Watch Out For* and *Fun Home*, with a place on national syllabuses internationally for her work, past, present, and no doubt future, Bechdel also gave birth to "The Bechdel Test" for films. In a strip she had a character espouse the idea (to another woman) that they would only watch films with at least two female characters who would speak to each other about something other than men. And it was surprising how many films – and comics – failed that test. And it is one that many comics creators have chosen to directly address in their work.



84 **JEFFREY BROWN** Small press comics creator, albeit one critically acclaimed, in the last year, something remarkable happened. *Star Wars. Vader And Son, Vader's Little Princess,* and *Jedi Academy* have sold seven figures, hitting the top of the charts and staying there, creating a brand new market in the process. And changing the way a number of people look at their licenced products as well. Expect copycats for years to come.



85 CHRIS HARDWICK Stand-up comedian turned geek messiah, Chris Hardwick is rapidly becoming the Voice Of Comic Con, as Nerdist expands its operations all over the place, with comics publishers rapidly wishing to win his favour, and promote their work. Though we will never let him forget his interview where he mistakenly thought Scott Snyder and Jeff Lemire were the founders of Vertigo...



86 CINDY FOURNIER VP of Operations at Diamond Comic Distributors, Cindy is a old school distributor, working for Bud Plant before Diamond bought it up, with a ten year history at McDonald's as well. She was instrumental in some of the changes that Diamond have been making to date, including the move to the Olive Branch mega-warehouse as well as Diamond Digital. She has comics, and getting them around the world, in her bones.

87 BECKY CLOONAN Possibly one of the cleverer comic book artists, she has used her fanbase and associations with others to propel herself to stardom, by choosing the right projects with the right people and, in an industry that judges female artists harshly, made herself a commodity to be desired by fans and publishers alike. From *Conan* to *Batman* to *Fabulous Killjoys,* she's also created her own creator owned work that has grabbed an Eisner with her first outing.

88 CHUCK PARKER Exec VP and COO of Diamond, if he actually cared about comic books, he'd be higher. Chuck Parker was Diamond Comic Distributor's first Controller. A steady hand on the tiller, more likely to be conservative and resisted digital at the company more than most before succumbing to its inevitable grip, and allowing Diamond Digital to go ahead. Many have complained that the comics industry hasn't sufficiently prepared for digital, and Chuck is a key part of that reticence.

89 **RICH JOHNSTON** Comic book reporter for over twenty years, now head writer of the Bleeding Cool website and magazine, Rich Johnston's infamy lies in breaking stories before publishers' PR would like, finding and promoting the coolest comics before they are a blip on the radar, and pursuing the criminals of the comics industry. Has changed the way comic publishers deal with their public image, possibly for the worse. He writes in the third person.

90 **MIMI CRUZ** Owner of the Night Flight comic stores in Salt Lake City, Utah, Cruz is in rather an unique position, with a store inside the central Salt Lake City library. This has given her a direct relationship with libraries and supplies comics and graphic novels to many libraries nationwide. Make a case for your graphic novel and she can see it stocked on thousands of library bookshelves overnight. There aren't many who can add that kind of print run to a book – Mimi Cruz can.

91 **CHRIS STAROS** The small publisher that could – from an early vanity press, Chris Staros has built Top Shelf into a major independent voice of comics. He continues to hold the line against mediocre comics and push work that challenges the medium yet maintains a surprisingly mainstream appeal for new audiences. From *Surrogates* to *From Hell* to *Owly*, Staros is playing the role that Gary Groth and Fantagraphics played in the eighties and nineties. He just happens to be more genial at it.

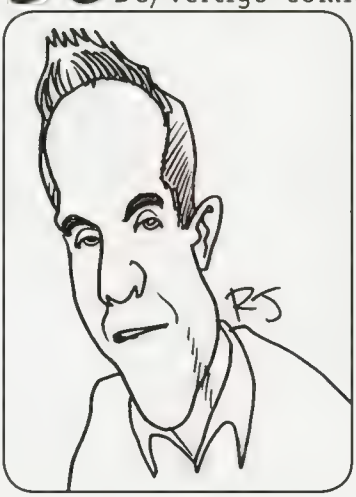
92 **FAE DESMOND** General Manager of the San Diego Comic Con since 1985, Fae Desmond is the woman who makes the whole show work. Formidable but approachable, she makes the impossible happen on a regular basis, dealing with celebrities, studios, publishers, retailers, creators, and large boats mooring at the harbour, and making it look as bright and breezy as if she was running a bake sale.

93 **JAMES LUCAS JONES** Editor-In-Chief of Oni Press, James Lucas Jones is the modern day Gary Groth, editor-in-chief of a publisher pushing the medium and their creators, and has attracted mainstream media attention without pandering to them, either. With films and TV spin-offs, the publisher remains committed to putting out some seriously great comics, without a toy licence in sight.

94 **CHARLES BROWNSTEIN** President of the CBLDF, Charles Brownstein has the ability to fenagle work out of the best and the brightest for good causes, while also pursuing an agenda of free speech. The work of the charity remains prominent, both other cases it chooses to publicly pursue and the voices it can persuade to speak out on its behalf and donate newsworthy items to raise money. This year's San Diego Comic Con CBLDF Party was the only one to be seen at.

95 **MATT KINDT** The comic book creator who broke the hegemony of the Image Comics launch hype, with *Mind MGMT* for Dark Horse. Suddenly those break out creator owned books can come from anywhere. And in demand. In October, he had seven books out, in November, he has six. One of which he draws/letters/colours as well. Right now, everyone wants a piece of him.

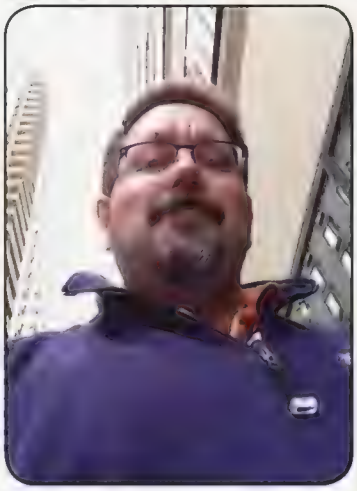
96 **WILL DENNIS** Senior editor at DC/Vertigo comics, the departure of Karen Berger has seen his seniority rise, closer to level pegging with his now-superior Shelly Bond. Together, they are commissioning new comics for Vertigo at a rate that hasn't been seen for a number of years, with some decent retail support.



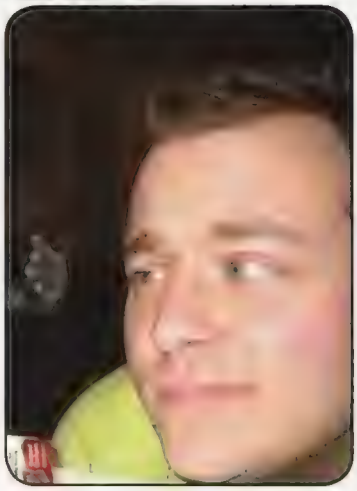
97 **KATIE COOK** The writer who brought major success to IDW with the launch of *My Little Pony*, and with a cult fanbase who love her art as well, she's is most distinctive for regularly having the longer line at artists alley at shows, possibly for the five dollar watercolour sketches, but also everyone wants a little piece of her. The day she runs a Kickstarter, she will probably rocket up this list.

98 **RICH BURLEW** Creator of the *Order Of the Stick* meta-fantasy web comic, Burlew has had a successful couple of years, no more so than when he Kickstarted over a million dollars to fund the publication and printing of collections of his comic. Sadly, a hand injury last year has slowed down his productivity and prevented him from drawing much since.

99 **MATT MOORE** Writer for Associated Press, he has a keen interest in all things comic book and has been a go-to for publishers looking for publicity for something a little mainstream-attention focused. His job can and will regularly ensure that articles about comic books and graphic novels with something to say, will appear in national and regional news publications across the world.



100 **BRIAN TRUITT** If there's a comic book article in *USA Today* (and there usually is), odds are it's been written by Brian Truitt. The newspaper has dedicated itself to covering this strange clique of publishing, and it's Truitt who writes almost every one. He even got the newspaper an Eisner nomination out of it. And *USA Today* still has so many readers, he can direct them towards the medium, and specific examples at that. Wined and dined, feted and fawned over, Brian Truitt never bites back. He just lets the world know how great your comic is.



Of course, not all lists are about the powerful. Others are more whimsical, sillier, with stranger criteria. But somehow they'll get argued about just as much as the big one. Seriously, for the most attractive creators I had lobbyists from those convinced Ales Kot was the most gorgeous creature in God's creation. Maybe next year... here's a few to warm you up.

Top Ten People In Comics Who Most Want To Punch Rich Johnston

01. Mark Waid
02. Ron Marz
03. Brian Bendis
04. Mark Millar
05. Diane Nelson
06. Chuck Dixon
07. Pat Lee
08. Josh Hoopes
09. Tony Harris
10. Greg Capullo

My Top Ten Favourite Comics, Today

01. Sleaze Castle
02. From Hell
03. Longshot Comics
04. The Cowboy Wally Show
05. Acme Novelty Library
06. Dork
07. Phonogram
08. Unstable Molecules
09. Epicurus The Sage
10. The Authority

Top Ten Rich List Of Comics

01. Isaac Perlmutter
02. David Choe
03. Jamie Hewlett
04. Peter Cuneo
05. Jim Lee
06. Kevin Feige
07. Thomas Tull
08. Albert Uderzo
09. Bill Jemas
10. Scrooge McDuck

Top Ten Power Couples Of Comics

01. Kelly Sue DeConnick and Matt Fraction
02. Amanda Conner and Jimmy Palmiotti
03. Rachel Dodson and Terry Dodson
04. Kathryn Immonen and Stuart Immonen
05. Becky Cloonan and Andy Belanger
06. Heidi MacDonald and Ben McCool
07. Shelly Bond and Philip Bond
08. Melinda Gebbie and Alan Moore
09. Hope Larson and Bryan O'Malley
10. Jann Jones and James Robinson

Top Ten Fanciable People In Comics

01. Grant Morrison
02. Emanuela Luppachino
03. Stephen Christy
04. Sara Pichelli
05. Scott Morse
06. Kelly Sue DeConnick
07. Jamie McKelvie
08. Jill Thompson
09. Clay Mann
10. Jennifer Grünwald

Twenty Notable People That Are Not In The Top 100

01. Heidi MacDonald
02. Frank Miller
03. Fiona Staples
04. Garth Ennis
05. Chris Hardwick
06. Howard Chaykin
07. Brian Wood
08. Darwyn Cooke
09. Ed Brubaker
10. Ron Perazza
11. Bill Rosemann
12. Ron Richards
13. Kiel Phegley
14. Brandon Graham
15. J Scott Campbell
16. Alex Ross
17. Jonathan Ross
18. Kevin Smith
19. Mark Siegel
20. Pam Noles

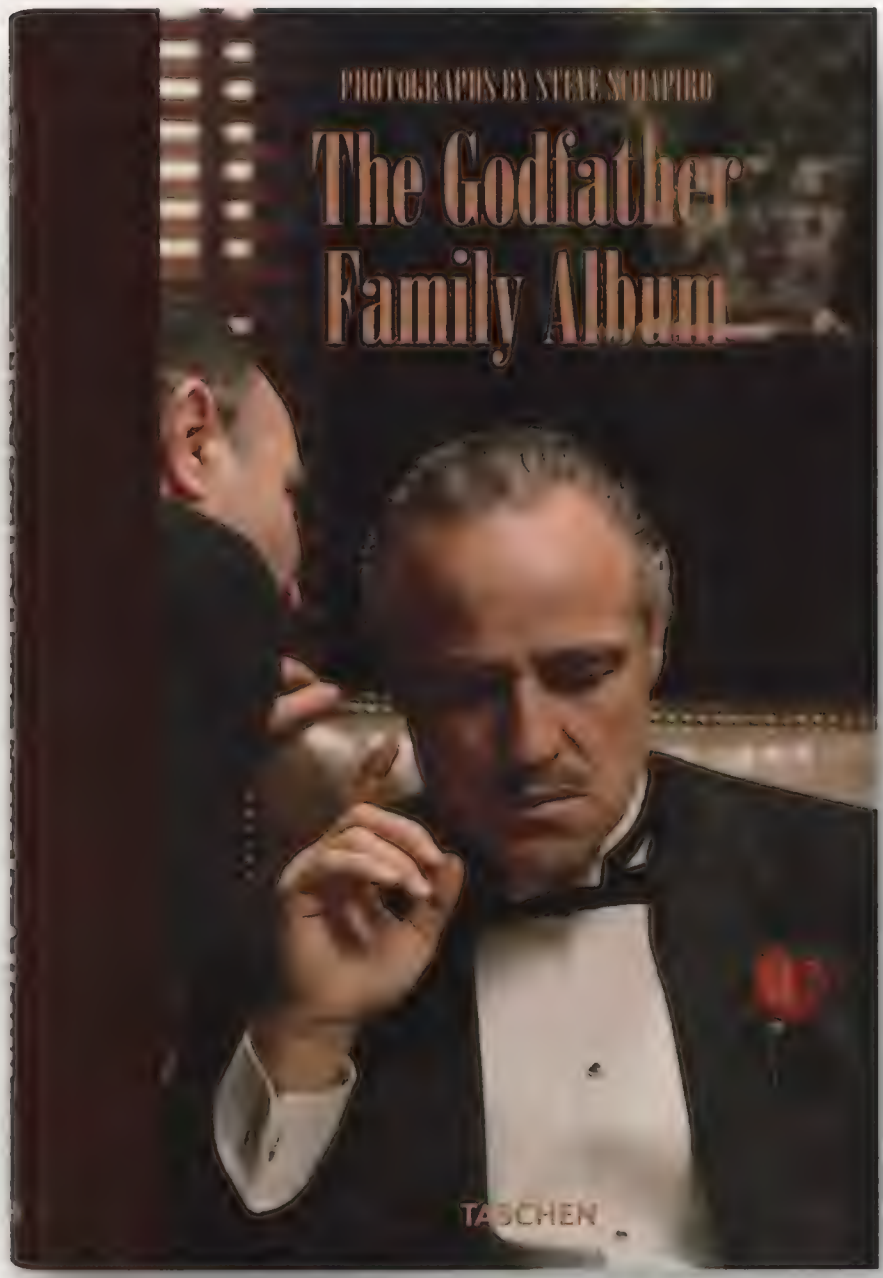
THE GODFATHER OF PRINT

by Brendon Connelly

After unburdening my groaning, red-faced postman, I lugged Taschen's newly published *The Godfather Family Album* up the stairs, skinned it of its packaging, and put it on the weighing scales. It came in at two kilograms, six hundred and forty-seven grams. Surely Kindles were supposed to save us from this kind of back breaking tome?

Well, this side of playing dangerously with matches, I can't think of a worse fate for this book than reducing it to ones and zeroes. It's got serious heft, sure, but that's so much of its pleasure.

The Godfather films themselves are great masses, heavy with histories both real and imagined, retold within their scenes and also of their own making, so before I even opened the book, I was feeling a palpable connection between the medium and the subject.



And then there was the simple, guilty pleasure of the first flick through, bombarding myself with flashes of all six hundred pages, indulging in the book as a design item rather than digging in to the substance just yet. I'd often stop on a picture that caught my eye, enjoying it out of context, then flick on.

But most of all, the real reason I'm glad to have this book in hand rather than floating off in the cloud is the simple, functional brilliance of its double page spreads. Imagine one of Steve Schapiro's photographs on the right side, the words of Mario Puzo, Rupert

Evans, Francis Ford Coppola, or one of the other many contributors on the left. I could read a little, flick my eyes right to see the ideas in these words illustrated, then back to the text, then back to the illustration. Even something as simple as a swipe on an iPad screen can't compete with the unconscious skipping stone of the gaze, hopping back and forth between image and text. For all their convenience - actually, because of their scaled-down, pocket friendly convenience - a tablet or e-reader can't create the big, table top experience that a book like this affords.

And as with all of Taschen's film books, this feels like an archive item. It's almost like having your own heavy box smuggled out of the studio vaults, something to spend a lot of time perusing very carefully. In this case, it's a very rich archive, too.

Sometimes Schapiro's pictures capture what would seem to be moments from the fictional world, snapshots that The Corleone family wouldn't want to see in syndication, but mostly they're pulled back a little more or turned in the other direction, breaking the illusion to strengthen your appreciation of the craft or evoke the character of the people making the film.

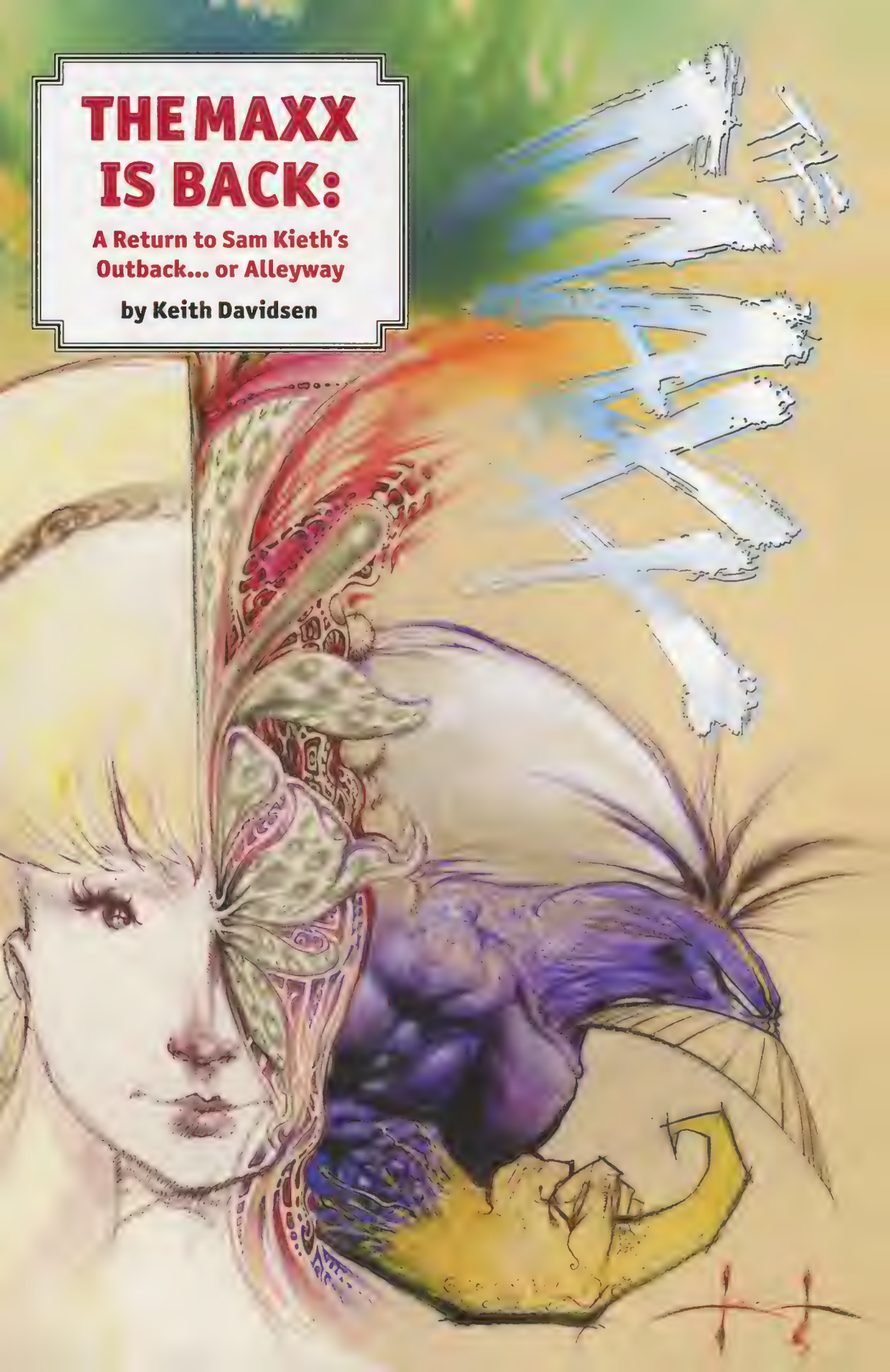
Like most folk that I've ever asked, I'm a big fan of the second *Godfather* film, down with the first, but somewhat cold on the third. It's not surprising that *Part III* sees far less coverage in this book- on its own, maybe just 500 grams worth - but what there is proves fully engaging. Coppola gets plenty of chances to illuminate his thinking, the pictures are every bit as candid and surprising as with *Parts I* and *II*, and the material often feels fresher because, honestly, nobody much has treated the film with this much respect before.

Similarly, it wouldn't immediately strike me as a good idea to weigh down the floorboards with a deep, thick book about Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, but Taschen has also compiled Steve Schapiro's photos

from that movie's shoot and it took me just one guilty flick through that book to convince me it was a good idea to add that to my collection, too.

Taschen's *Taxi Driver* was re-released around the time of *The Godfather Family Album* in an almost identical format, every bit as serious-minded but also richly illustrated. With just one film to chronicle, it's an inevitably slimmer tome, but you might be surprised by how little difference there is, stacking up at 328 pages against the *Family Album*'s 600 for a full trilogy. Again, it almost felt like a privilege to see some of this material.

And so Taschen has built the foundations, with just two books, of a considerable library on the movie-brat Hollywood of the 1970s, and between these two volumes, the story being told is far bigger than that of anything just Coppola and Scorsese were up to. This is a lesson in how the studios made films back then - almost unthinkably different from how they make them now.


THE MAXX
IS BACK:
A Return to Sam Kieth's
Outback... or Alleyway
by Keith Davidsen

THE MAXX IS BACK
by Keith Davidsen

CHUNG! CHUNG! CHUNG! The pounding in your head is back, the repetitive jungle rhythm that, with each beat, accompanies a break in reality. Where once stood brick and mortar alley walls, now lay the breezy marshlands of distant, mythical Pangaea. Away go the tenements, the collapsing ruins of society, and the towering mountain people appear in their stead, menacing god-beings of the Outback. Toothy, mischievous Iszes run wild, impish creatures with silly antics – but a deadly force when in carnivorous packs. And in the distance, a beautiful and fierce woman stands, the Leopard Queen, for whom you would do anything...

Welcome back to the world of *The Maxx*! Courtesy of IDW Publishing, Sam Kieth's surreal superhero epic will return to comics as it celebrates twenty years since its original launch in 1993. Each and every vibrant chapter of *The Maxx*'s 35-issue run will be brought back to life in a variety of formats, re-mastered and recolored for the enjoyment of nostalgic fans and a new generation both.

THE WORLDS OF SAM KIETH

In the early 1990s, when Image Comics publications first hit newsstands, the comics audience was thrilled by wave after wave of hot artwork and designs... but the characters and concepts themselves were, by anyone's estimation, a bit derivative of the most popular titles published by The Big Two. But not so with Sam Kieth's *The Maxx*, which burst onto the scene as part of the second wave of Image pioneers. *The Maxx* was... something altogether different.

Perhaps it was Kieth, drawing inspiration from the moody, experimental storytelling of his time on Vertigo's *Sandman*, or maybe it was actual influence from his nightly dreams and nightmares transposed to the page, but *The Maxx* took the

traditional costumed hero archetype – grimy urban setting, spandex, and all – and turned it on its ear. Month after month, readers took a journey with its main character, seeing through *The Maxx*'s eyes and questioning his identity right alongside him. Was he a vagrant superhero? A hunter prowling an otherworldly Outback? A spirit animal – perhaps a bunny – imagined into existence by the beautiful Julie Winters? If he removed his mask... would he even have a face?

At its core, *The Maxx* was a mystery of identity. Kieth introduced three main characters: The Maxx, Julie Winters, and the malevolent Mr. Gone, and through a fascinating series of narrative jumps (and perhaps jumps through dimensions or psychic planes), we explored who these people were and how they related. Julie Winters, for instance, suffered a tragedy (at the hands of Mr. Gone) that fragmented her personality into her tough-as-nails "real world" self, a goddess-like Jungle Queen, and an innocent yet sad Li'l Julie. *The Maxx* was irrevocably tied into her life on all levels, through all worlds, serving as her protector, guide, and even victim. Discovering who these people were and how they came to be tragically intertwined... well, that was half the fun.

The other half was pure, good ol' fashioned violence.

MOVE OVER, FRANK MILLER

No offense to Mr. Miller, whose exceptional *Sin City* and *300* graphic novels were lauded for their faithful big screen adaptations – but for fans of funnybooks-turned-films, *The Maxx* stood brooding shoulders above all other cinematic adaptation for its perfect translation from print to boob-tube. Sure, comic book heroes had been licensed to appear in other media, but prior to *The Maxx*'s inclusion as part of MTV's Oddities animation showcase, film studios had never previously utilized the actual panel-to-panel sequential storytelling of

the source material (i.e. issues #1-11, plus a few rare appearances elsewhere in print) as the actual storyboards for the final product.

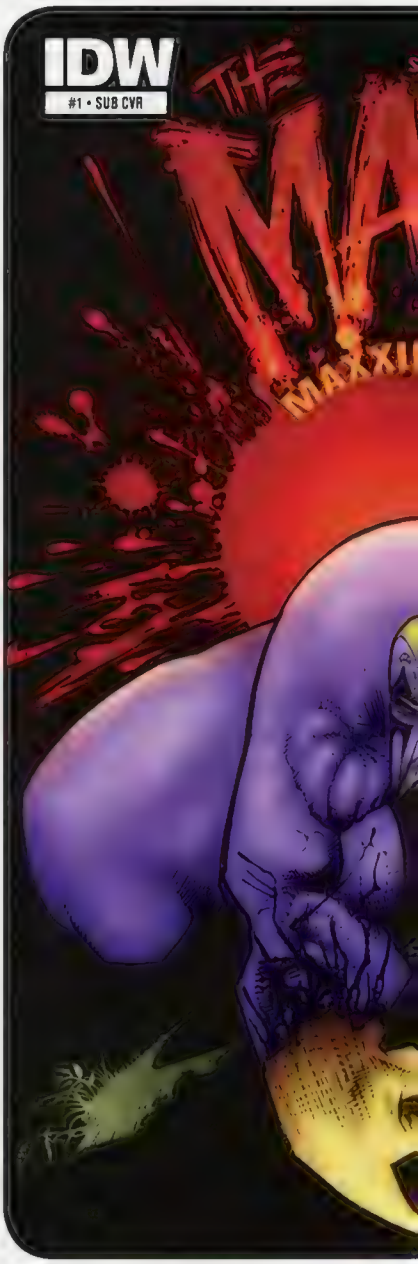
The folks at Rough Draft should be applauded for their respect of the comics medium, and to their experimental storytelling techniques that perfectly brought Kieth's oftentimes psychotically abstract style (no offense to Mr. Kieth either – in fact, it's meant to compliment) to animated life. For readers at the time, *The Maxx* was the mind-blowing television program to watch, a virtual Pandora's Box that opened our thoughts to all kinds of new surreal experiences.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

IDW has accomplished what many might find remarkably odd or risky in today's marketplace: publishing monthly periodicals featuring reprint material of their most popular licensed properties. *Transformers, GI Joe, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* – these are name-brand properties whose wealth of backlist comics are mined regularly for new comic book releases, albeit cleaned up frequently with new scans and colors. *The Maxx* would be only the latest in a long line of reprint successes from IDW Publishing... but in the case of Sam Kieth's masterpiece, the innovative publishing house will be taking the variety of formats to several interesting extremes.

First, the entire original 35-issue run will be re-released as *The Maxx: Maxximized*, a monthly series fully re-mastered and re-colored as overseen by Kieth himself. Each issue will feature fresh new cover artwork, painted by the creator. The re-mastering process includes new, clean scans of the original storyboard artwork at higher resolution, capturing the finer details that the original scanning technology of twenty years ago left behind. The award-nominated Ronda Pattison (*Atomic Robo*) will provide new colors.

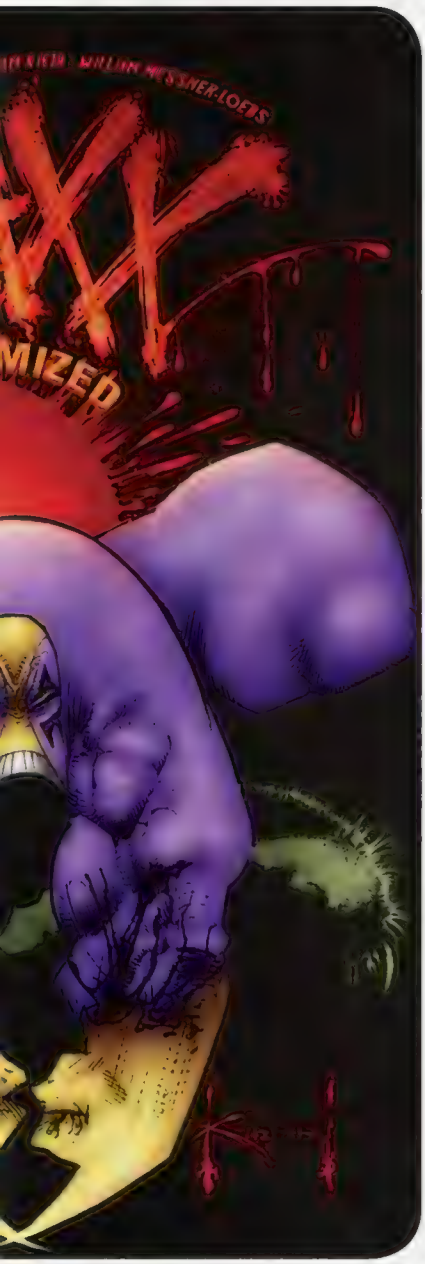
As an added bonus, Kieth plans to incorporate long-lost artwork into each issue – not directly into the narrative a la George Lucas, but rather as special features in the back of the book. These gems of a bygone era might include design sketches, cover concepts, and finished scenes not present during the initial run on *The Maxx*.



Now, what about those additional formats hinted at above? IDW has announced two additional formats for the dedicated Maxx collectors. For the first time ever, *The Maxx* will be collected in a series of affordable hardcover collections, with a uniform dress and high-quality, durable presentation worthy of the epic series. This format immediately elevates the IDW publications beyond what had been produced previously at Image and DC / Wildstorm. While the single issue reprints will serve as an introductory experience for a new comics-reading generation,

the hardcovers – released once the contained single issues have been published – will satisfy their appetite for having a complete story in one place.

Furthermore, IDW will continue by giving *The Maxx* the Artist Edition treatment – the oversized hardcover format that celebrates the creative process of the trailblazing Sam Kieth. *The Artist Edition* features high-resolution color scanning of original storyboard artwork, capturing the look of the artwork as originally illustrated, with all distinctive creative elements intact. Each scan is then printed on heavy paper, sized to correspond to the original artwork itself, to give readers a more realistic experience of what it would be like to hold actual storyboard pages. Imagine seeing *The Maxx* in all his violent fury, Julie Winters in all her curvaceous beauty, or Mr. Gone in all his sinister glory… exactly the way that Sam Kieth saw the finished artwork on his drafting table.



The Maxx deserves the highest quality of publication – it's truly an awesome piece of graphic literature, a fascinating exploration of realities. And in that respect, it also is fitting that IDW is the home to *The Worlds of Sam Kieth*, three comprehensive art books that serve as a retrospective of his illustrious career, from *Sandman* to *Marvel Comics Presents* to *The Maxx* to *Zero Girl* and beyond. The first volume, highly anticipated by fans and comic aficionados, debuted earlier this year at San Diego Comic-Con.

DAMN, I WAS TALKING OUT LOUD AGAIN

To conclude, I'd like to share a personal anecdote about *The Maxx*. My first introcution to the character was through *Darker Image*, a one-shot anthology published by Image Comics that showcased Sam Kieth's purple-clad avenger alongside the memorable *Bloodshot* by Jim Lee, and the… less memorable *Bloodwulf* by Rob Liefeld. It was a fascinating read, for certain… but it wasn't until I saw the MTV cartoon that *The Maxx* took hold.

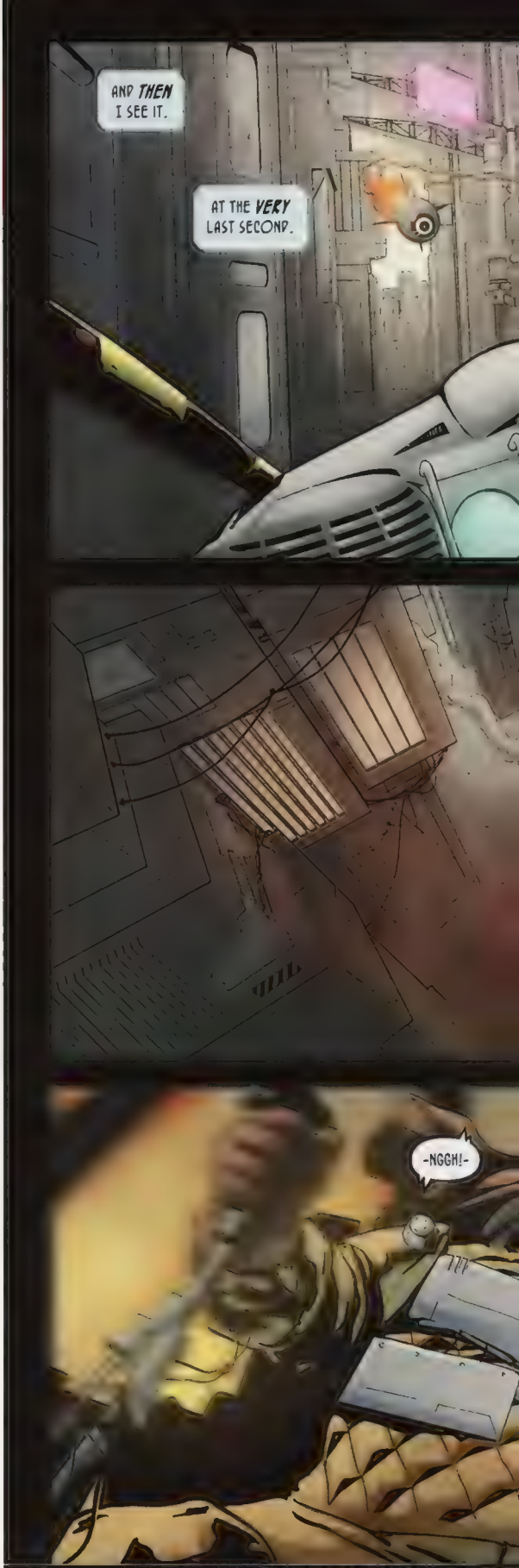
That *Maxx* cartoon was the reason to wrest control of the TV remote from my parents – for the first time in my life, as a matter of fact. Gone were the nights watching re-runs of *Hill Street Blues* or *M*A*S*H*. And sure, there were some uncomfortable moments with my parents, as I awkwardly had to sit next to my folks and listen to the occasional Julie Winters diatribe on rape and victimization… but I wouldn't give up that adolescent discomfort for anything. I leapt from the television to the comic page in an impassioned search for more *Maxx*. Sam Kieth's incredible imagination, his unparalleled artistry, his completely unique vision – it was one of the highlights of my teenage years. I couldn't be more thrilled to see one of the greatest creator-owned comics of all-time hit store shelves again, courtesy of IDW and Sam Kieth himself.

DIGITAL-FIRST COMICS LIKE HAWKEN: MELEE MAY BE THE FUTURE OF VIDEO GAME CROSSOVERS

by Hannah Means-Shannon

There is a degree of presumed overlap between comics readers and gamers, but that does not make it any less of a risk when a publisher decides to launch a video game crossover comic. If the gamers buy comics or the comics readers are interested in reading narratives set in a gaming universe, there will be sales, but how easily will publishers break even after the initial interest generated by the launch? Some publishers have proceeded with cautious optimism in the past, and that has paid off for big-name gaming properties like *Halo* and *The Last of Us* from Dark Horse, and *Dead Space* from Image. With the increasing availability of digital comics, and the expansion of online gaming as a mode of choice, the audience for both may become more unified and lead to a new kind of synergy as reader-players jump between screens in their free time. The screen experience could become a major operative factor in tipping the balance between a viable idea for a comic series and the certainty of reaching an established audience.

While Dark Horse and Image have been willing to take a gamble on video game inspired comics, many other mid-sized publishers have been more circumspect. Archaia, however, seems to have recognized the digital-online connection and not only made their first foray into this new territory with the graphic novel *Hawken: Genesis* in the Spring of 2013, and the follow-up single-issue mini-series *Hawken: Melee* appearing this September online, and in December in print. *Hawken: Genesis* was published as a hardback graphic novel simultaneously with a full digital version available on ComiXology, but with *Hawken: Melee*, Archaia are moving to digital first issues, a



breakdown that expresses some confidence in continuing the *Hawken* property in comics. The graphic novel featured a balance of well-known comics artists like Nathan Fox, Alex Sanchez, and Bill Sienkiewicz, and told an intricate origin narrative for the corporation-driven colony planet of Illal as featured in the free online gaming platform known as *Hawken*.

Adhesive Games produced *Hawken* as a multi-player first-person shooter game in December of 2012 under the creative direction of Khang Le, focusing on the role of piloted "mech" fighting craft engaging in strategic battle sequences during civil conflict on their human-colonized world. By the Spring of 2012, *Hawken* had received dozens of award nominations, and gathered five awards at PAX in the same year. It is not surprising that the rapid success of the game, which also prompted interest in film development, caught the attention of Archaia when considering potential gaming crossovers. *Hawken* had an established internet-geared fanbase, was free to play for those who might read the comic and then become interested in the game, and even hosted a fan fiction forum with interactive community features. *Hawken* already had an intellectual presence well beyond the actual game-play, so why not expand on its established mythology?

Archaia's strategies for developing the graphic novel *Hawken: Genesis* had features in common with Dark Horse's *The Last of Us: American Dream*. Like Dark Horse, Archaia brought one of the creators of the game, in this case Khang Le, onboard to help guide the story, but paired that decision with approaching experienced comics artists. In both cases, the comic does not attempt to be a direct graphic rendering of game play plot or images, but instead places the comics medium first while embedding nods to a gaming origin. *Hawken: Genesis*, for instance, employs horizontal panels and distance shots to

suggest a screen experience, but moves into tighter panels for close-ups and dialogue.

Hawken: Melee starts off with a similar approach. The first issue, "20 Seconds," which has a photo-realistic cover by Tim Bradstreet and is illustrated by Federico Dallocchio, uses this "widescreen" effect in panel layout for two pages before alternating between wide shots and more traditional panel grids. But while *Genesis* was created as a prequel and origin story for Illal's civil war, *Melee* #1 dives right in to the more well-known features of the *Hawken* game, including the first person shooter experience of a mech pilot in comics format. The shooter narrative draws the reader in by focusing on a single character's experiences, and presents intense battle scenes from his perspective, although it also uses a vantage exterior to the mech he drives. Though the issue is action-driven, there is a powerful build in the storytelling toward a decisive theme and outcome, emphasizing the human aspect of mech drivers in a way that would be unlikely to crop up in the game itself. *Melee* #1 wisely avoids simply rendering gaming images by focusing on narrative closure.

The second issue of *Melee*, "Friendly Fire" takes remarkably different approach to representing a gaming universe in comics by, to all appearances, putting comics tradition first. Again, this issue follows the life of a mech driver, but this time most of the narrative takes place in civilian life with a decisive focus on flawed human behavior as a driver hot-shot throws his weight around town. Not only are the settings that are used far from a first person shooter experience, but the comic's writer and artist Jim Mahfood jumps into an underground comics style that extends even to his own distinctive lettering. The colors on "Friendly Fire" are bright and clashing, in distinct contrast to the earth tones typical of warzones on Illal in the first issue. Human figures loom large rather than technology, something

that adds considerable dimension to the *Hawken* universe.

In the case of "Friendly Fire,"reading the comic may influence the way in which gamers view the world of *Hawken*, but it follows the precedent of exploring the personal lives of central characters as established in the graphic novel *Genesis*. If the first issue was a gradual transition from gaming assumptions into comics narrative, the second issue boldly declares its comics identity and explores *Hawken*'s mythology on its own terms. An established comics reader is likely to respond favorably to this affirmation of the medium as *Melee* appropriates the world of *Hawken* and creates its own ethos and atmosphere. Some elements of "Friendly Fire" build on established *Hawken* gaming assumptions, however, since the issue focuses on the behavior and interaction of teams of mech drivers and also uses key terms like "safe spot" for recovery zones, both of which feature in the game.

Game franchises are often wary of allowing comics adaptations or spin-offs that might influence the direction of the gaming experience. In the case of *The Last of Us*, game and comic writer Neil Druckman was reluctant to agree to a comic series for precisely this reason. His solution was somewhat elegant, to develop *American Dream* himself, allowing for some authorial control over the property, and also to expand the narrative of the comic within the confines of the game universe itself rather than in unexplored narrative territory. This meant that rather than write a prequel to the game, he created an inset episode to be drawn by Faith Erin Hicks. Working with Archaia, Khang Le not only stayed involved in the development of the *Hawken: Genesis* graphic novel, but made a bold move in allowing Archaia to generate an origin story in full.

The *Melee* series, however, is firmly embedded within the perimeters of *Hawken*'s game world, featuring mech drivers, in

particular, so far. So when it comes to allowing overlap between the time-setting of the game and the new series, the kind of plots and missions are well-synced. That is going to allow for a wide variety of relevant stories to be told in the comic featuring a possibly endless series of mech drivers, just like the possibly endless recruits joining the game platform and playing as new mech drivers daily. *Hawken: Melee* moves closer to the strategy employed by *The Last of Us: American Dream*, possibly due to an awareness that gamers and comic readers may be a more unified demographic than they had previously assumed.

Hawken: Melee promises to tell five very different tales in tone and style due to bringing on distinct teams of writers and artists for each, but that also seems to confirm the influence of a fan experience of playing *Hawken* wherein separate missions can be radically different, especially depending on what other online players join your team. In a way, the diversity in the mini-series mirrors the fan fiction and community support features that the game supports. In the case of the new series, and

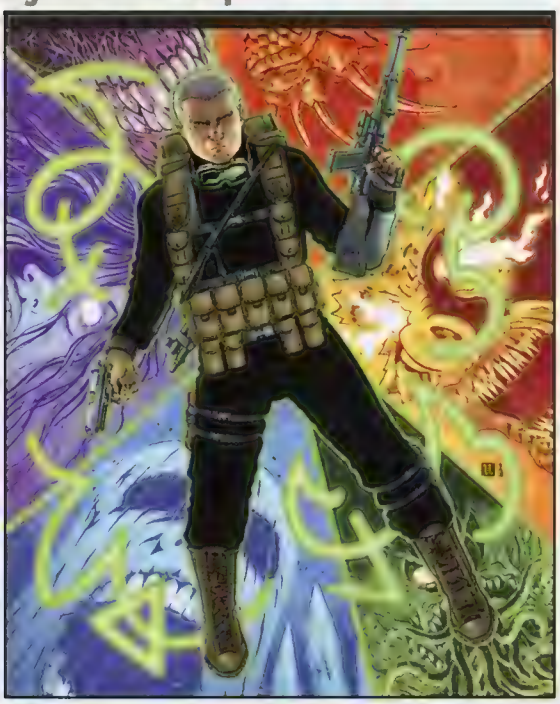
the game, original input from participants is constantly shaping the aesthetics and development of the *Hawken* universe. That can happen with greater ease in a digital environment, and when readers download an issue of *Melee* unfettered by the restrictions of geographical location, they have the same access that gamers around the globe experience when they log onto the *Hawken* website.

The physical ways in which participants are gaining access to gaming and comics material are becoming increasingly interchangeable, and that may have an even bigger impact on how companies like Archaia handle video game-based comics in the future. Rather than attempting to expand into safely undeveloped directions so as not to clash with established game precedents, comics, and especially digital comics, may find they are right at home in the evolving narrative of the gaming world. It remains to be seen whether game companies will become more cautious about the ways in which their properties could be influenced by comics narratives setting up shop with increasing confidence right at the heart of their gaming experience.

THIS AIN'T HARRY POTTER– A RETURN TO GRAVEL

A Candid Conversation with Creator Mike Wolfer

by Joshua Kopin



At the end of the last century, after Avatar Press had established itself as a company devoted to the wild and the gruesome, Warren Ellis was among a group of established industry names that came to the publisher to try their hand at the uniquely violent style. Among the things that he brought with him was an idea for a sort of occult James Bond, a combat magician named William Gravel, working missions that the British SAS needed to be able to deny. For Gravel's first story, eventually published under the name *Strange Kiss*, Avatar matched Ellis up with the Kubert School trained industry veteran Mike Wolfer; the pair have been following the character's adventures in the world of the British supernatural ever since. Early next year, nearly fifteen years after William Gravel's debut, Avatar will release *Gravel: Combat Magician* and Wolfer will take on writing the character solo for the first time.

Although this is first time that Wolfer will take full writing chores on Gravel, he is a life-long fan of comic books and horror stories and a veterancomic book writer and artist. He got his start in the industry self-publishing as Ground Zero Comics in the 1980s, writing and drawing books like the Japanese monster movie inspired *Daikazu* and the science-fiction fable *Widow*. Wolfer brought the latter series to Avatar just after its formationin 1995 and, since then, has penned or penciled horror books like *Night of the Living Dead, Friday the 13th, Stitched, Escape of the Living Dead,* and *Lady Death.* He says, however, that the work of which he's most proud of has been his work, with Warren Ellis and now on his own, on *Gravel.*

Part of this pride has to do with the book's success; Wolfer says that it has gained and maintained a certain amount prestige amongst readers, and that it attracts a different audience than the one his other work does. In those books, he adds, "I can write my ass off, do some deep character studies, and make profound social commentaries, but because of the graphic nature of those comics, the message is lost. *Gravel* is extremely graphic, but it isn't about exploitation. It's about telling solid stories first, shocking readers second." That prestige was evident quickly; the three-issue *Strange Kiss* mini-series sold well, he and Ellis produced a sequel, *Stranger Kisses*, and then four more mini-series, under the title *Strange Killings*, all in glorious black and white. Wolfer describes these minis as "'vignette' adventures"in which Gravel took "dirty moon-lighting jobs for beer money," and faced off "against some of the sickest, most perverted horrors we never knew existed in our world."

Then, in 2007, Avatar put out an ongoing series in full color, and Wolfer became the book's co-writer. Ellis sent Wolfer "'scriptments,' which were super-detailed

plots and included vital dialogue exchanges-- the really important points, in other words-- but it was up to me to choreograph much of the action sequences and fill in the blanks, which was a lot of fun." This series, now called *Gravel*, ran until 2010 for 21 issues. Wolfer took the chance to flesh out William Gravel and his world, and he believes that he and Ellis "pieced together a complete picture of the solitary, military man with ties to an ancient, occult organization which comprises the mystical backbone of the British Empire" and "explore his ties to the occult world. The color *Gravel* series," he adds, "was the back story which fans were waiting for, exposing the secret hierarchy of 'The Minor Seven' and 'The Major Seven,' and Gravel's hesitant ascension to power as the occult world's 'Last King Of England.'"

All of this does sound a little familiar, given that Gravel is an English occult detective, often depicted smoking a cigarette, who spends his time fighting the worst sort of ghastlies and beating back the worst sort of demons. He is, of course, obviously and easily compared to DC's John Constantine. Wolfer says that fans occasionally tell him so, although, having never read any *Hellblazer*, he confesses to being unable to say one way or the other. While that character is restricted by DC's standards and hews closely to the lines of the supernatural genre, however, the books featuring William Gravel are done in the all out Avatar style and borrow from many other genres; Wolfer is confident that everyone will find something to like in

Gravel: Combat Magician, which is a book that "defies definition...there's a little bit of everything in there. There are elements of horror and fantasy, there's mystery, there's politics. There's history, military elements, extreme violence, soul-searching. Lots of guns and lots of magic, and a bit of super-heroics, if you will. There's what I hope is sly humor and punch-in-the-gut plot twists."

Fans of the most recent ongoing series will be delighted to know that *Gravel: Combat Magician* picks up right where *Gravel* left off, with William Gravel facing the consequences of having torn "through the existing tiers of Britain's occult apparatus, basically dismantling the whole structure to expunge the society of its detached and arrogant rulers." At the same time: "Gravel became a non-entity-- his military ties and records mysteriously disappeared and his very existence was erased from the minds of those who knew him. However, at the conclusion of the 'Last King Of England' storyline, Gravel's military superiors became re-aware of him, and after being declared AWOL, he was tracked down and arrested."

Wolfer is aware that the presence of all of that backstory may turn some readers away. When the 48-page issue #0 comes out in January, 18 pages will be a summary of the story so far, allowing people new to the character to transition into the new series, which will start right where the last one left off. While this introduction is specifically designed to appeal to new readers, Wolfer cautions that old fans shouldn't skip the

recap; there is, he says, something in there for the "continuity freaks."

It is clear, however, that *Gravel: Combat Magician* is a slightly different beast, if only because Wolfer is now writing the book all by himself. Although Warren Ellis is off doing other exciting things and developing other interesting projects, Wolfer wanted to make sure that his work was going to be in line with the ideas Ellis had of the character and, after having written a year and a half's worth of story ideas before he moved forward, sought Ellis's guidance and received approval. Although this may seem unusual, given the way that creators follow each other on books that are published, say, by Marvel and DC, Wolfer believes that the most important thing he can do while following Ellis is "keep the voice consistent." This is something that he has struggled with, in part, he says, because, "Gravel's British and I'm an American. And I'm talking specifically about slang and colloquialisms. I'm sure there are many times when Warren's said, 'Bollocks. That's not how we speak.'"

More than anything else, Wolfer believes that "Gravel's appeal, and what makes him such a complex character, is that he's not a complex character at all. He's a very simple beast." What makes Gravel exciting, the thing that has given it the prestige that it has earned, enough for Wolfer to bring the character back, is that it is a book about a man "with incredible abilities navigating through a frightening side of our world that the common man doesn't know exists." And, yet, it does exist; most importantly of all, despite the fact that Gravel's world is filled with the ghastly, gruesome, and terrifying, our own world is reflected in the one that Wolfer has made. He says it best: "despite that incredible premise and how Gravel is painted as an individual with abilities we can barely comprehend, his voice and conscience is still very much our own. Readers can relate to him on a personal level, because he is us-- he is the common man thrust into very uncommon and nightmarish scenarios."

Gravel: Combat Magician will debut in January, with issue #0. Mike Wolfer will be writing and Gabriel Rearte will be on art.

VINTAGE PAPER CHASE

by Mark Seifert & William Christensen

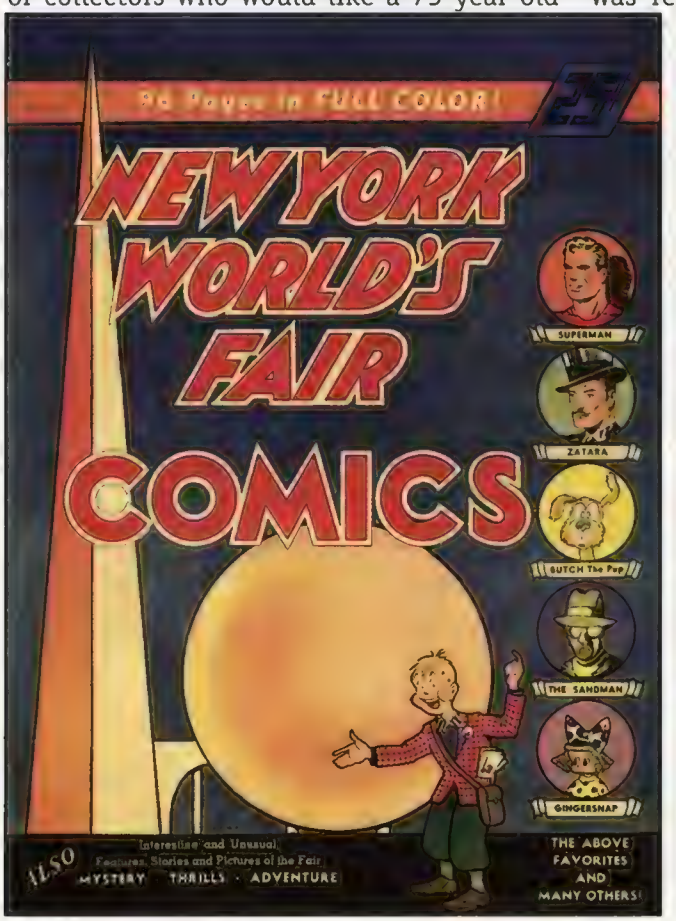
A few months ago, we mentioned the 75th anniversary of the release of *Action Comics* #1, and the significance of that for Superman and comic book collecting. But the 75th anniversary party is just getting started in comics: 2014 will see the 75th anniversary of the release of the first appearance of Batman in *Detective Comics* #27, the release of the first Marvel comic with *Marvel Comics* #1, the launch of Superman in his own series with *Superman* #1, and numerous other noteworthy comics from 1939.

Golden Age

As we keep saying here in Vintage Paper, it's all well and good if you can afford a *Detective Comics* #27 and a *Superman* #1, but where does that leave the other 99.99% of collectors who would like a 75 year old comic that has significance to fans today?

New York World's Fair 1939 was a DC Comics release tied into the launch of that event in New York which featured very early Superman and Sandman stories. There's probably no other superhero comic out there that is a combination of this early, this historically important, and this cheap. VG-range raw copies can be had in the $3000 range. This book has been perennially underappreciated by collectors, but that's in the process of changing. A 1939 DC superhero key that can be had for mid 4-figures? Yes, please.

New York World's Fair 1940 and *World's Best Comics* #1 are even more overlooked, and often easier to afford. *World's Best Comics* #1 is a particularly interesting case. This is the debut issue of the long-running and important Superman/Batman (in separate stories until issue #71) series which was retitled *World's Finest* with issue #2. The entire Golden Age run of *World's Finest* has been out of favor for the past decade or more, but the title will forever be synonymous with the pairing of the world's two most popular superheroes in one series, so it's difficult not to think of it as a bargain in the long term at currently-depressed price levels. VG-range raw copies of *World's Best Comics* #1 can be had for around $2000-$2500, while a CGC 7.0 copy went for $5079 in early 2013.



Silver Age

A Silver Age comic which is important for key appearances of several characters has also come to prominence in recent months. X-Men #4 is the debut of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, and the first appearance of Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch. The Scarlet Witch will play an important role in the *Avengers: Age of Ultron* film, while Quicksilver will

X-MEN
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Featuring: THE RETURN OF THE DREADED MAGNETO!
AT LAST!! THE X-MEN COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH "the BROTHERHOOD of EVIL MUTANTS"
X-MEN! THE MOST UNUSUAL TEEN-AGERS OF ALL TIME!!

be in both that film and the *X-Men: Days of Future Past* movie. This has been one of the hottest Silver Age comics out there over the past few months. Prices are currently very volatile, but high grade raw copies have been going in the $750-$850 range, while the person who bought a CGC 9.4 for $6000 on ebay recently probably got a tremendous bargain. These are also moving very briskly in lower grades, such as CGC 3.0 for $300, and CGC 6.0 for $500.

You can read quite a bit about the recently-released *Thor: The Dark World* elsewhere in this issue of *Bleeding Cool Magazine*, but if you haven't seen it yet, you may want to skip down to the Bronze Age section.

If you have seen it or don't mind spoilers, then you know why *Avengers* #28 is currently gaining traction in the marketplace. We are in the very early days of the market cycle on this book, and it has plenty of room to run, with current values in the $100-$150 range for high grade raw copies. However, surprisingly few of these have traded in CGC high grade this year, with a CGC 9.0 copy hammering at an eyebrow-raising $515 as we prep this issue of Bleeding Cool Magazine for press.

Bronze Age

Whether you love DC's New 52 or hate it, you have to admit it has been very interesting from a longtime DC collector's perspective, as they have revived (or reconfigured) a number of lesser-known properties from every era of their back catalog—from *National Comics* to Thomas Wayne Jr. to the Green Team, no corner of the DC Universe is being left unexplored.

Not all of these new releases have resulted in interest in their historical origins. But one of those recent explorations, the debut of the Joker's Daughter including a very well-received Villains Month issue, has prompted collectors to take another look at the character's first appearance in *Batman Family* #6. High grade raw copies are moving in the $100-$150 range, while a CGC 9.6 recently sold for $206.

The Future Of Vintage Paper

Do you know of any vintage comic sales of note? Are you an experienced dealer or collector who wants to contribute info? Let us know at: *vintage-paper@bleedingcool.com*.

TEN COMICS THAT ARE HOT... OR MIGHT BE SOON

by Rich Johnston

Warning! The value of comics may go down as well as up. Indeed, more frequently they go down. So be warned. Never bet on a comic book more than you can risk to lose. And try and find your own speculator picks if that's what you're into... it's better not to do what everyone else is doing, after all!

1 ***Avengers*** #28. First appearance of The Collector, as seen in the end credits of *Thor The Dark World*. This book from fifty years ago was previously hot for the first appearance of Goliath, and can still be picked up, in varying grades for $30-$40 or so. But remember what happened to those first appearances of Thanos? Get one in decent nick and it's probably worth a slab. Talking of which...

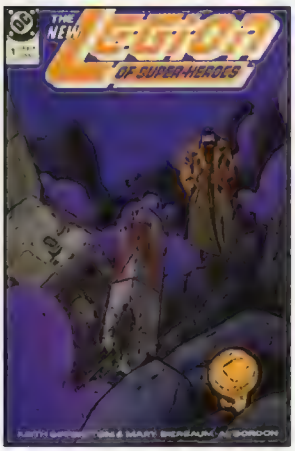
2 ***Thor Annual*** #6. Where Thanos and Collector are joined together, you shall get the *Korvac Saga*. Which began here before moving into *The Avengers*. Shouldn't be too hard to find a NM copy for $10, and if this does become the plot of *Avengers 3* or *Guardians 2*, well you'll be rather pleased.

3 ***Avengers*** #158. The reason we're on these books right now is also the performance of *Avengers* #158 after the appearance of Graviton on Marvel's *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* TV show. Still not too hard to find in the dollar boxes up and down the land, the signs are that the character will return in the season finale, and people have been paying $30 on eBay to get this one in time.

4 ***A Dark Knight Falls***. The final issue of the four part *Return Of The Dark Knight* series by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. It can be picked up for $3 to $10 easily, but when people realise just how much of this is in the upcoming *Batman/Superman* film, it may be a different story.

5 ***Superman: Man Of Steel*** #18. At what point will they do a Superman Doomsday movie? At some time in the next twenty years, it will happen. Doomsday's first appearance sells for $5 to$10. In comparison, the first appearance of Bane now tops $100 after *The Dark Knight Returns* appearance. I'd call this one planning for the future.

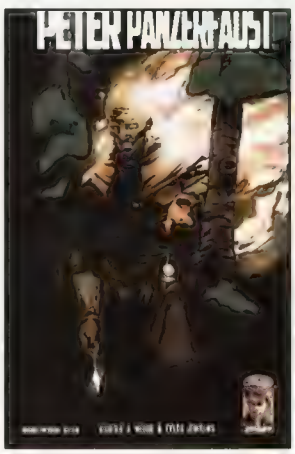
6 ***Brain Boy*** #1. Dark Horse registered a trademark for this little baby and they don't do that without big plans ahead. A film? Cartoon? Stage show? Keep watching those Bleeding Cool movie announcements!



7 ***Legion Of Superheroes Vol 4*** #1. When the Legion relaunched with Keith Giffen with volume 4 in 1989, they did so with a Five Year Later jump in time. With the smart money on next year's September Event from DC Comics also being called Five Years Later, could that spark some revived interest in the original? On the basis that this is worth about fifty cents, how wrong can you go?

8 ***Three*** #1. Kieron Gillen is a rising star at Marvel Comics, with the Iron Man revelations hitting the headlines and the Wolverine *Origin* sequel on the way. *Über* from Avatar can't exactly harm things either. But while most Image Comics launches are returnable, this one wasn't, so retailers ordered less. Image launches have been less notable for speculators of late, but this may prove an exception.

9 ***Afterlife With Archie*** #1. Just telling people the concept of this book gets people's eyes to bug out. Sabrina The Teenage Witch gets HP Lovecraft's Necronomicon and uses it to bring back Jughead's dead dog – and the Riverdale undead with him. This had a fast sell-out, and interest hasn't peaked yet...



10 ***Peter Panzerfaust*** #15. This is a hot comic. no doubt. But the most recent issue has the first appearance of Big Bad, Croc. With the Hook first appearance getting plenty of back issue action, is it worth checking your store to see if they have any left?

PRICE GUIDE
for Collectors and Sellers

Welcome to the Bleeding Cool Price Guide. This is a snippet of the kind of prices comics are selling for on the open market. Rich Johnston scoured the web and thousands of online auction listings to provide this snapshot of comic book sales. A price listed here is no guarantee you'll be able to sell yours for that price, but it might give you an idea of what someone, somewhere, is willing to pay! Retailers who would like to become part of an advisory board for the Price Guide feature should contact Jim Kuhoric via email: *jimkuhoric@bleedingcool.com*

Image Comics Launches For 2013

Sex Criminals #1	$4
Ghost Variant	$13
Forbidden Planet	$10
Canadian Ed	$10

Rat Queens #1	$4
Staples Variant	$25
1:10 Variant	$15
Reality Check #1	$2.50
Zero #1	$3.50
Cloonan	$3.50
Burnham	$3.50
Phantom	$12
The Sidekick #1	$3
Adlard	$3
San Diego Comic Con	$30
Image Expo	$30
Phantom	$13
Sketch Variant	$5
Burn The Orphanage (Born To Lose) #1	$8
Guillory	$8
Hastings	$16
Third Eye	$12

Satellite Sam #1	$6
Image Expo	$30
Midtown B+W	$30
Midtown Colour	$12
San Diego Sketch	$21
Mile High	$10

Ghosted #1	$8
Image Expo	$50
San Diego Comic Con	$26
Sheltered #1	$4
Image Expo	$25
Maximum Comics	$19
Yesteryear	$18
Lazarus #1	$7
Midtown	$15

Forbidden Planet $14
CBLDF $13
Comic Asylum $15

Ten Grand #1 $8
Dynamic Forces $5
Dynamic Virgin $30
Mile High $20
Phantom $10
Forbidden Planet $16

The Bounce #1 $3
Diamond $18
Forbidden Planet $15

Dream Merchant #1 $3

Jupiter's Legacy #1 $3
Hitch $3
Midtown $13
Forbidden Planet $12
Frank Quitely Variant $7
Phantom $7
Sketch Variant $4

Chin Music #1 $3
Phantom $10

Miniature Jesus #1 $6

Five Ghosts #1 $6
Phantom $10

Lost Vegas #1 $5

Sex #1 $3
Variants $5

Snapshot #1 $7
Forbidden Planet $10

Five Weapons #1 $16

Son Of Merlin #1 $4

East Of West #1 $10
C2E2 $200
Ghost Variant $17
Phantom Variant $15
Forbidden Planet $45

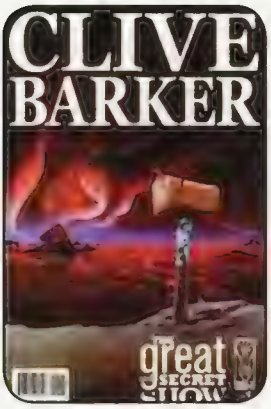
End Times Of Bram & Ben #1 $3

Todd The Ugliest Kid On Earth #1 $30

Clive Barker

Hellraiser #1 $7
Pencil Sketch $6
Larry's Limited Edition $10

Hellraiser: The Dark Watch #1 $6
#6 $6
#7 $6
#8 $6



The Great And Secret Show #1	$4
#8	$5
#9	$5

The Next Testament #1	$15
Signed Variant	$100
#2	$5
Variant	$9
#3	$5
#4	$6

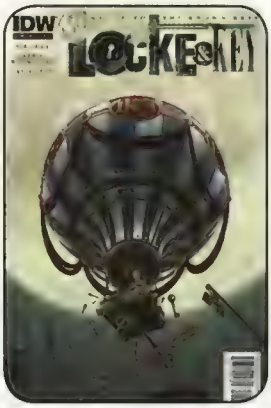
Seduth 3-D	
Cover A	$4
Cover B	$5

Joe Hill

Locke & Key Alpha #1	$8
Photo Variant	$25
Cards Comics and Collectibles	$21
Double Midnight	$20
Hastings Variant A	$25
Hastings Variant B	$27
Jetpack Comics	$25
Newbury Comics	$29
Overlook Connection	$16
Super-Fly Comics	$12
Third Eye Comics	$12
Time Warp	$20

Locke & Key Omega #1	$12
Retailer Incentive	$9
Locke & Key Omega #2	$10
Retailer Incentive	$15
Locke & Key Omega #3	$5
Retailer Incentive	$6
Locke & Key Omega #4	$5
Retailer Incentive	$12
Locke & Key Omega #5	$5
Retailer Incentive	$9

Locke & Key Grindhouse One-Shot	$15
Sketch Variant	$9



Locke & Key Guide To The Known Keys	$25

Max Brooks

Extinction Parade #1	$5
Leather Variant	$20
Gold Leather Variant	$179
Platinum Leather Variant	$150
Wrap-Around Variant	$15
End of Species Variant	$5
Mid-Town Variant	$20
Hastings Variant	$15
Mile High Variant	$10
Blood-Washed Variant	$8
#2	$6

Stephen King

The Stand Omnibus	$81

Captain Trips #1	$3
Sketch Variant	$10

B&W Variant	$3
Captain Trips #2	$1
Captain Trips #3	$9
Captain Trips #4	$5
Sketch Variant	$8
Captain Trips #5	$5

Dark Tower - The Sorcerer One-Shot	$13
Dark Tower - Guide to Gilneas	$8
Dark Tower - End Of The World Almanac	$7

Dark Tower - The Gunslinger Born #1	$10.50
Sketch Variant #1	$10.50
Sketch Variant #2	$10.50
Sketch Variant #4	$9.75
Sketch Variant #5	$7

Dark Tower - The Long Road Home #1	$4
Variant #2	$5
Sketch Variant #5	$9

Dark Tower - Treachery #1	$4
Variant #1	$5

Dark Tower - The Waystation #1	$4
#2	$4
#3	$5

Steve Niles

30 Days of Night #1	$40
#2	$40
#3	$35

Big Foot #1	$6

Breath Of Bones #1	$8
#2	$6.50

Chin Music #1	$4.50
Phantom Variant	$10.00

Frankenstein Alive! Alive! #1	$10

Only $1.99 for over 100 pages of content you can't get online! Kieron Gillen's smash hit, *Über*, unleashes an exclusive #1/2 comic that you can only get right here! *Über #1/2 Sieglinde* delves deep into her origin and each copy of *Bleeding Cool Magazine* #8 has a unique redemption code so you can read it. This code gets you one FREE digital copy of this issue, but also allows you to order a limited print copy, certain to be a must-have collectible for *Über* fans. We also uncover the secret new *X-Files* project coming out including a price guide focus on the classic series! **Rich Johnston** tells us the winners and losers of 2013 and looks ahead to the biggest comics on the horizon! **Brendon Connely** takes us behind the scenes of the biggest upcoming movies with exclusive photos and scoops on Hollywood's super events. Follow along with our **Collections Into Cash** and **Price Guide** features to keep track of the latest trends and ways to profit from your comics. Delivering over 100 pages per issue on a bi-monthly release schedule, each issue is full of articles that are ***NOT AVAILABLE ON THE WEB!***

BLEEDING COOL DIRECTORY
Retailer List

United States & Territories

- Legion: Birmingham, AL
- Deep Comics & Collectibles: Huntsville, AL
- Arkham Comics: Blytheville, AR
- Drawn To Comics: Glendale, AZ
- Jesse James Comics & Collectibles: Glendale, AZ
- Metropolis Comics: Bellflower, CA
- Collectors Ink: Chico, CA
- Comics-N-Stuff: El Cajon, CA
- Super Heroes In Training: Escondido, CA
- I.E. Comics And Games: Hemet, CA
- Nuclear Comics & Boards: Laguna Niguel, CA
- The Comic Bug: Manhattan Beach, CA
- Njoy Games & Comics: Northridge, CA
- Affordable Cards: Ontario, CA
- Comic Odyssey: Pasadena, CA
- Comics & Collectibles: Sacramento, CA
- Comickaze: San Diego, CA
- On Comic Ground: San Diego, CA
- Villainous Lair Comics: San Diego, CA
- Yesteryear Comics: San Diego, CA
- Nekosphere: San Francisco, CA
- Whatever Store: San Francisco, CA
- Space Cat Comics & Cards: San Jose, CA
- Captain Nemo Comics: San Luis Obispo, CA
- Illusive Comics & Games: Santa Clara, CA
- Earth-2 Comics: Sherman Oaks, CA
- Dream World Comics: Simi Valley, CA
- D J's Universal Comics: Studio City, CA
- Comics Toons 'n' Toys: Tustin, CA
- Comics Unlimited: Westminster, CA

Collector's Paradise: Winnetka, CA

- Mile High Comics: Denver, CO
- I Want More Comics: Northglenn, CO
- Rogue Comics: Bridgeport, CT
- The Comic Book Shop: Wilmington, DE
- Docking Bay 95: Coconut Creek, FL
- Superhero Beach: Jacksonville Bh, FL

New Force Comics & Collectible: Lynn Haven, FL

- Coliseum Of Comics: Orlando, FL
- Famous Faces & Funnies: West Melbourne, FL
- P.P.F. Comics Inc: West Palm Beach, FL
- A Comic Shop: Winter Park, FL
- Oxford Comics: Atlanta, GA
- Columbus Book Exchange: Columbus, GA
- Checkle Comics & Collect: Fayetteville, GA
- Dr. No's: Marietta, GA
- Randyland Gaming: Newnan, GA
- Chimerical Entrprises: Sandy Springs, GA
- Collector Maniacs: Honolulu, HI
- The Core: Cedar Falls, IA
- Alley Cat Comics: Chicago, IL
- G-mart: Chicago, IL
- Amazing Fantasy Comic Shop: Frankfort, IL
- Al N' Anns Collectibles: Mchenry, IL
- Have Fun Collectibles: Moline, IL
- Graham Crackers: Naperville, IL
- Beyond Tomorrow: Palatine, IL
- Dragons Refuge: Peotone, IL
- Tims Corner: Rock Island, IL
- Comic Service: Springfield, IL
- Reader Copies: Anderson, IN
- Vintage Phoenix Comic Books: Bloomington, IN
- Comic Quest Inc: Evansville, IN
- Clem's Collectibles: Fort Wayne, IN

Discount Comic Book Service: Fort Wayne, IN

- Hometown Comics: Greenfield, IN
- Creative Comics: Griffith, IN
- Comic Carnival: Indianapolis, IN
- Comic Book World: Florence, KY
- Comics 2 Games: Florence, KY
- The Great Escape : Louisville, KY
- Arcadian Comics & Games: Newport, KY
- Comic Vault: Radcliff, KY
- Little Monster Comics: Somerset, KY
- Louisiana Double Play: Baton Rouge, LA
- My Comic Store: Agawam, MA
- Smartflix.Com: Arlington, MA
- Friendly Neighborhood Comics: Bellingham, MA

Newbury Comics: Brighton, MA

- New England Comics: Brockton, MA

Larry's Comics: Lowell, MA

- Bob's Hobbies & Collectibles: Springfield, MA
- Harrison's Comics & Pop Culture: Woburn, MA
- Third Eye Comics: Annapolis, MD
- Beyond Comics: Gaithersburg, MD
- Collectors Corner: Parkville, MD
- Phoenix Rising Games And Comic: Salisbury, MD
- House Of Pop Culture: Waldorf, MD
- Top Shelf Coins & Comics: Bangor, ME
- Cashmans Comics: Bay City, MI
- Comix Corner: Fraser, MI
- Tardys Collectors Corner: Grand Rapids, MI
- Nostalgia Ink: Jackson, MI
- Collectors Corner: Midland, MI
- Galaxy Comics: Saginaw, MI
- Wonderworld Comics & Games: Taylor, MI
- Comics Plus: Coon Rapids, MN
- Comic Book Adventure: Minneapolis, MN
- Cotten's Cards Comics & More: Rochester, MN
- Source Comics & Games: Roseville, MN
- Friendly Franks Comic Cavern: Kansas City, MO
- Newcastle Comics & Games: Maryland Hgts, MO
- Fantasy Shop Inc: St Charles, MO
- Carolina Comics : Chapel Hill, NC
- Atomic Empire: Durham, NC
- Acme Comics: Greensboro, NC
- Classic Comics: Lewisville, NC
- Capital Comics Of Raleigh: Raleigh, NC
- Foundation's Edge: Raleigh, NC
- Salefish Comics: Winston Salem, NC
- Comic Junction: Fargo, ND
- Mail Order Comics Inc: Omaha, NE

Jetpack Comics: Rochester, NH

- Chris' Comic & Cards: Seabrook, NH
- Manifest Comics: Bayonne, NJ
- Conquest Comic: Bayville, NJ
- Joker's Child: Fairlawn, NJ
- Elite Battlegrounds: Green Brook, NJ
- Funny Books, Comics & Stuff: Lake Hiawatha, NJ
- Dewey's Comic City: Madison, NJ
- Level Up Entertainment: Mays Landing, NJ
- A & S Comics: North Bergen, NJ
- Little Shop Of Comics & Cards: Scotch Plains, NJ
- Kirkman Comics Corp: Toms River, NJ
- Stormwatch Comics: West Berlin, NJ

- Frankenstein Comics: Woodbury, NJ
- Astro Zombies: Albuquerque, NM
- The Comic Warehouse: Albuquerque, NM
- Cactus Comics : Henderson, NV
- Alternate Reality Comics: Las Vegas, NV
- Earthworld Comics: Albany, NY
- Heroes Your Mom Threw Out: Elmira Heights, NY
- Blu Planet Entertainment: Massapequa, NY
- The Comix Zone: N. Syracuse, NY
- Best Comics & Collectibles: New Hyde Park, NY

Midtown Comics: New York, NY

- All Heroes: Rochester, NY
- Comics Etc.: Rochester, NY
- Alterniverse: Salt Point, NY
- Atomic Comics: Shirley, NY
- Fourth World Comics: Smithtown, NY
- Two Kings Comics: Victor, NY
- Sanctuary Comics: Watertown, NY
- Grasshoppers Comics: Williston Park, NY
- Bill's Books & More: Canton, OH
- Rockin' Rooster: Cincinnati, OH
- Carol & John's Comic Shop: Cleveland, OH
- Cleveland Comics: Cleveland, OH
- Bell Book & Comic Ltd.: Dayton, OH
- Heroes For Sale: Vandalia, OH
- Dark Star Books: Yellow Springs, OH
- Carolina Comics: Lawton, OK
- Speeding Bullet Books & Comics: Norman, OK
- Impulse Creations Inc: Tulsa, OK
- Mammoth Comics: Tulsa, OK
- Wizards Asylum Comics & Games: Tulsa, OK
- Things From Another World: Milwaukie, OR
- Excalibur Books And Comics: Portland, OR
- The Encounter: Allentown, PA
- Comics World: Chambersburg, PA
- New Dimension Comics: Cranberry Twnsp, PA
- Sackers Collectibles: Easton, PA
- Comic Collection: Feasterville, PA
- Wade's Comic Madness: Levittown, PA
- Ontario Street Comics: Philadelphia, PA
- Duncan Comics Books & Accessories: Pittsburgh, PA
- Rubber Mallet Comics: W Pittston, PA
- Americas Most Wanted Collectibles: Williamsport, PA
- Comix Connection: York, PA
- Comix Megazone: Arecibo, PR
- Metro Comics Inc: Guaynabo, PR
- The Time Capsule: Cranston, RI
- Rah-coco's: Providence, RI
- Heroes & Dragons: Columbia, SC
- Borderlands: Greenville, SC
- Players Choice: Myrtle Beach, SC
- Apocalypse Comics: N Myrtle Beach, SC
- Nuklear Comix: Sumter, SC
- Heroes Legacy: Clarksville, TN
- Lone Star: Arlington, TX
- Dragons Lair Comics & Fantasy: Austin, TX
- Urban Legends Comics: Mesquite, TX
- Alien Worlds: San Antonio, TX
- Heroes & Fantasies: San Antonio, TX

M & M Comic Service: San Antonio, TX

- Black Cat Comics: Salt Lake, UT
- Night Flight : Salt Lake City, UT
- Aftertime: Alexandria, VA
- Atlas Comics: Charlottesville, VA
- Untamed Worlds: Lynchburg, VA
- Four Color Fantasies: Winchester, VA
- Painted Visions Comics & Cards: Woodbridge, VA
- Ambrosia Sports And Comics: Bothell, WA
- Action City: Federal Way, WA
- Docking Bay 93: Mt Vernon, WA
- Adventures Underground: Richland, WA
- Ron's Coin & Book Center: Yakima, WA
- Rockheads Comics & Games: Kenosha, WI

The Westfield Company: Middleton, WI

Canada

- Baby Love Products: Camrose, AB
- Wizards Comics & Collectibles: Edmonton, AB
- Amazing Fantasy Comics & Books: Red Deer, AB
- Rx Comics: Vancouver, BC
- Curious Books & Comics: Victoria, BC
- Galaxy Comics & Collectables: Winnipeg, MB
- Hidden City Comics: Winnipeg, MB
- Monster Comic Lounge: Halifax, NS
- Strange Adventures: Halifax, NS
- Fantasy Realm: Cornwall, ON
- B.A.'s Comics & Nostalgia: London, ON
- Heroes Cards & Comics: London, ON

Image Collections: Mississauga, ON

- Dark Age Comics: Orleans, ON
- Red Nails Ii: Toronto, ON
- The Beguiling: Toronto, ON
- The Comic Pile: Toronto, ON
- Carry On Comics & Books: Waterloo, ON
- La Boite A B D De Laval Inc.: Laval, QC
- Librairie Premiere Issue Enr: Quebec City, QC

United Kingdom

- Legacy Comics: Halifax, England
- Comics N Toys : Kidderminster, England
- Excelsior Comics Limited: Kingswoods, England
- Millennium Comics: Northwich, England
- Chester Comic Company: England
- Imagination Station: England
- Ace Comics: Colchester, Essex
- Whatever Comics: Canterbury, Kent

Forbidden Planet: London

- Orbital Comics: London
- Gosh! The London Comic Shop: Berwick Street, London
- A Place In Space: Croydon, London
- Disposable Heroes: Belfast, Northern Ireland

International

- Ace Comics & Games: Annerley Qld, Australia
- Arcadia Unbound: Kingsgrove Nsw, Australia
- Kings Corporation: Sydney Nsw, Australia
- Archonia Nv: Diepenbeek, Belgium
- Alca: Paris, France
- Black Dog Comics Ohg: Berlin, Germany
- Comic Steiner: Wien, Germany
- Books Of Magic: Wuppertal, Germany
- Decomixado Comic Shop: Mexico City, Mexico
- Multiversum : Poznan, Poland
- Readers Den: Claremont, South Africa

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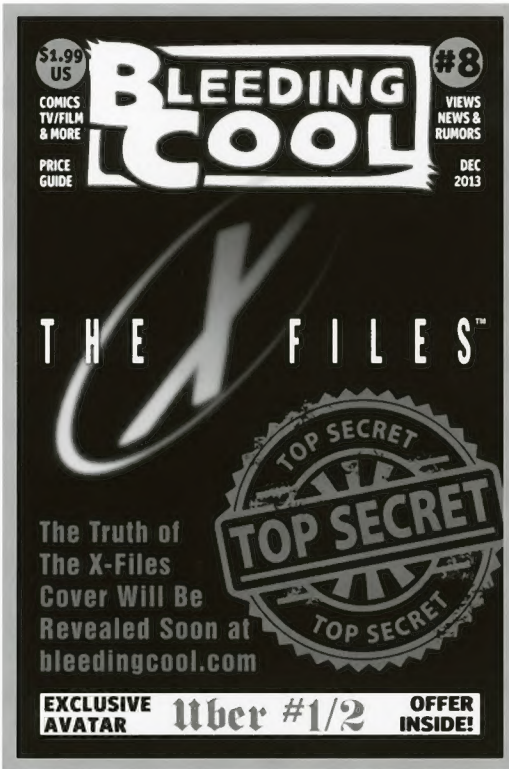

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